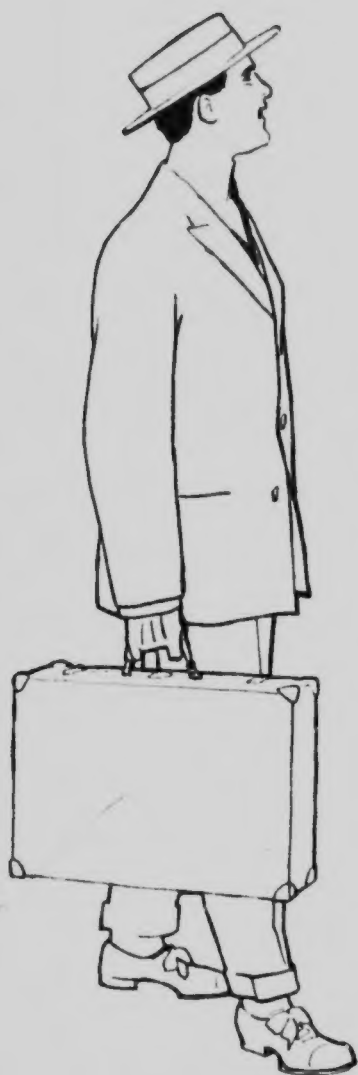




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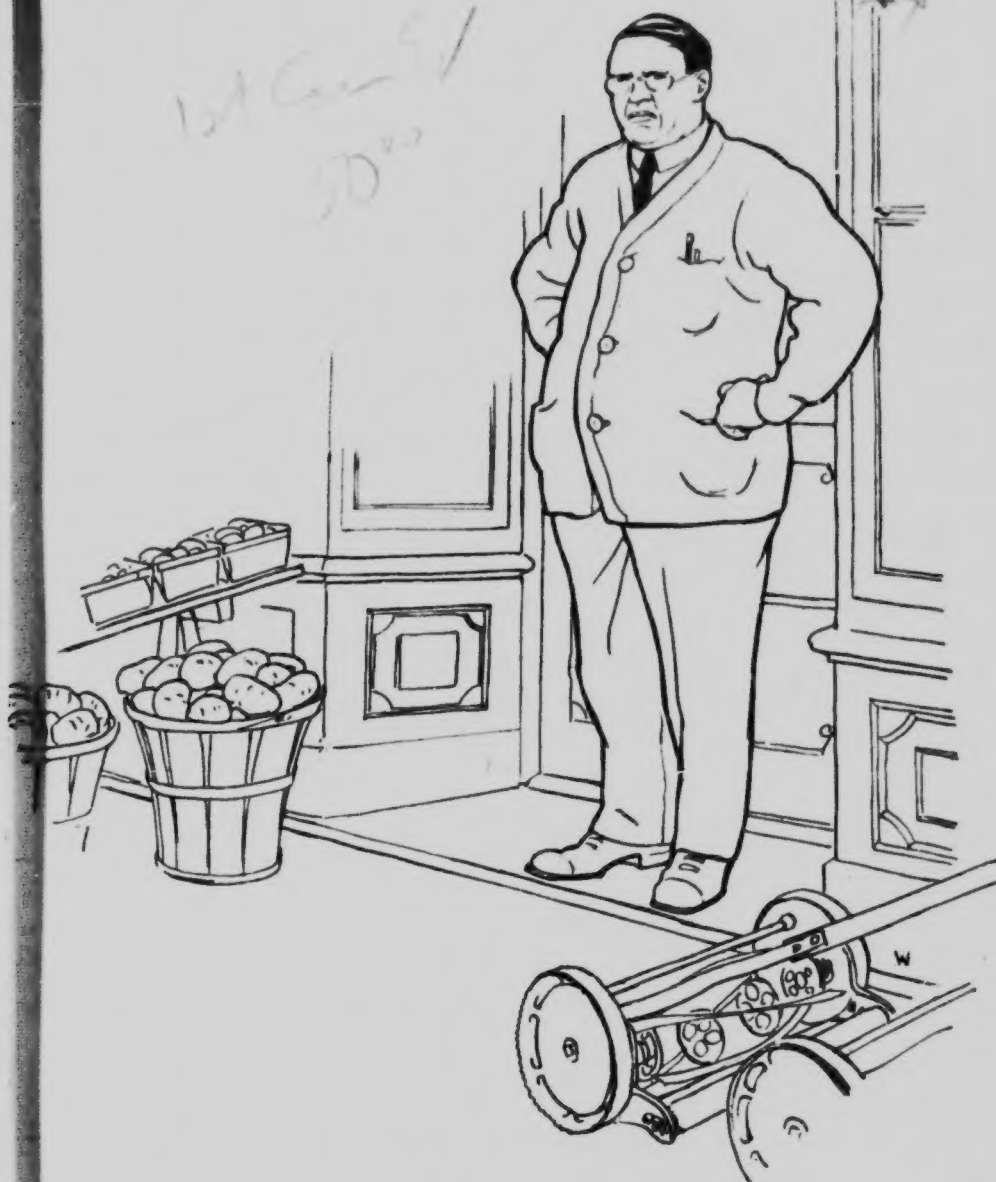
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**PETE CROWTHER: SALESMAN**







“ My mouth got dry and I had hard work telling Smith my name ”

**PETE  
CROWTHER:  
SALESMAN**

**BY  
ELMER E. FERRIS**



**ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. C. WIDNEY**

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SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE





## FOREWORD

*Take one part each of business common sense and fun and mingle this with equal parts of philosophy and sound ethics, filtering it all through the consciousness of a successful commercial traveller like Pete Crowther, and the result ought to be something worth while. Whether or not the author has succeeded in doing this must remain for you to determine. Meanwhile he hopes that you may find as much enjoyment in the reading of this book as he had in the writing of it.*

E. E. F.



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**PETE CROWTHER: SALESMAN**





# Pete Crowther, Salesman

## CHAPTER I

### CODFISH VERSUS GREEK

**I**T'S great when a man finds his place — I mean the work he's cut out for," asserted Peter Crowther. "There are too many misfits."

"Sure," responded Pierce. "But how is a man to find it? I've been reporting on the *Times* for two years, since I got through college, and I'm not certain that I've found mine yet. How did you happen to get into salesmanship, Pete?"

"I didn't happen at all. I wanted to do it from the time I was a kid. I was brought up in a country village in Iowa, and when I went to the district school I was always trading and swapping with the boys; and when I got older

4            PETE CROWTHER, SALESMAN

I wanted to clerk in the village store. It looked like the biggest job on earth. That's one way a fellow finds what he's cut out for. He will naturally take to it. I remember the day I started clerking. I was just seventeen years old. I put on some sleeve-holders and learned to do up a dollar's worth of sugar. The boys were all standing around watching. Say, I never felt so big since but once — that was the day I started on the road. Of course when I went into that store I had to quit school; but I wanted the job, and I took it."

"Would you advise a young fellow to give up a college education if he intends to be a salesman?" asked Pierce.

"I'm not advising anybody. I'm only telling you what I did. But, speaking about a college education, it's good for some and no good for others. If a fellow doesn't care for books but does want to work at some special thing, what's the use of cramming books down him? Then there's a lot of these 'rah-'rah boys in college, spending most of their time at cigarettes and sports — they'd better be put

to work before they get plumb spoiled. Education is teaching a fellow to work or it's no good. There's more than one way to get an education, too. You can get one in business if you go to it. But about that country store. We sold everything there — groceries, dry goods, clothing, boots and shoes, farm implements, and hardware. A country store is a good place for a salesman to start in. You've got to get down to brass tacks in a country village. Everybody is on to everybody else and hot air don't go."

"Did you make good there, Pete?"

"That's what! Let me tell you how I did it. I hustled for your life. You take it from me, hard work is over half of the game, no matter what a man goes at. These fellows that are always kicking on their luck are usually loafing on their job. It was a good country store, and we carried a big stock. The old man was a great trader, but he was weak on details. The store wasn't very clean and the stock wasn't well arranged. After I'd been there a while I went in to make it neat and attractive. It

took about three months of study and extra work just to get the goods arranged right. In the store business you've got to arrange goods so they will catch people's eye and sell themselves."

"That sounds good, Pete, but the next thing is to do it."

"Sure, and that's where ideas come in. There's no end to new schemes if you think them up. After I'd been there about a year I got the old man to tear out the front of the store and put in a couple of big show windows — one at each side of the door. It cost about \$400, and come mighty near costing me my job. The old man got grouchy on account of the expense, and when the job was finished it was up to me to make good. Those windows made me a lot of work. Talk about chores on a farm — they ain't in it with show windows! I batted my brains on that thing night and morning. Every time I went into the city I studied show windows to get ideas and I got a good many out of the trade journals, too. In one of the windows I kept a line of bargains

going — always something selling at cost. I got some stencil plates and printed signs on big cards. In the other window I kept a display of drygoods and notions — the classiest stuff we had. That was the window that I always laid myself out on. You see, every purchaser has got two sides to him — a tightwad side and a classy side. A good salesman will recognize the tightwad side and make a stab at it, but you bet he will make his principal play at the classy side. It's class that wins out. A man that's always pushing bargains and cutting prices is a cheap salesman. Salesmanship is getting people to buy quality goods. I remember one little deal that showed me that. We had a customer — a farmer — named Jenkins, who was pretty tight-fisted and a good talker. He wanted to buy a pair of cheap overalls. We had some light ones at forty-five cents and some bully good heavy ones at ninety cents. I got him to take the better ones. He grumbled when he handed over the money, but those overalls lasted him nearly a year. He would talk about them in the store. 'Why,

you jest can't wear out a pair of them darned things!' he would say. I guess he gave us over ten dollars' worth of advertising on that pair of overalls. It's this way: when a man buys a cheap article, he feels good when he pays for it, and then feels rotten while he's using it; but when he buys a quality article, he feels good every time he uses it, and he thinks about the quality a long time after he forgets the price."

"How long did you clerk in the country store?"

"About four years. Another thing I did: I studied the goods. Talk about an education! Let a fellow learn about the goods in a country store and he'll have an education. I was visiting a high-school class a while ago and a boy was covering some big blackboards with Greek stuff that looked all alike to me. They said it was parts of a Greek verb. I asked the professor afterward what was the good of all that monkey-work, and he said that, for one thing, it trained the memory and made the scholar accurate. Now you take just one

article in a country store — take codfish. What do you know about codfish? Where do they catch them, and where are the best varieties caught, and which have the best flavour, the large or small fish, and how are they cured and packed, and how are they put on the market, and is it better to handle them whole or in boneless packages, and which is the best food, salt fish or fresh fish, and what is the food value of codfish compared with meat, and what about prices and the best way to buy them? Why,

you could cover more blackboards with variations on a codfish than on a Greek verb, and if a man learns all about codfish, why isn't that just as good training for his memory as Greek? Isn't that education?"

"There's something in that, Pete; but there are other things to be said for Greek. It's not only a drill study, but a cultural study also."

"Cultural?"

"Yes. It introduces a man to Greek civilization and art and literature, and gives him a broader outlook upon life."

"What has that got to do with selling goods?"

If a man is out to sell goods and codfish is part of his line, then I say that a codfish has got it over a Greek verb."

"All right; go ahead with your codfish. I'm interested."

"So am I. A man likes to talk about himself. I've noticed in selling goods that if you can't interest a fellow any other way just get him to talk about himself, and you'll soon have him coming. Well, I learned all I could about boots and baking-powder and canned fruit and calico and all the rest. I spent lots of spare time comparing and testing goods. I read about them in an encyclopædia and studied trade journals and talked with travelling men and watched the markets in the papers, and it wasn't long before I knew more about goods than the old man did, and he used to consult me when he did his buying. The travelling men found that it was a good thing to stand in with Pete, and I enjoyed that. It's funny how a man likes to be 'it.' They're all alike — just the same in a country village as in Wall Street. Why does J. Pierp. Morgan keep on making



money? He doesn't need any more, but he likes to be 'it,' and so did I in that country store. But a fellow has got to keep humping himself. J. Pierp. has always humped himself, and so has John D., and so have I. Do you get that — J. Pierp., John D., and I? Another thing I did — I learned to play a fiddle."

"A fiddle!"

"Sure. Fiddling gives a man a big stand-in out in the country, and you take it from me that standing-in comes pretty near being the other half of the game. Did you read Andy Carnegie's testimony before the Stanley Committee, where he told how he had done Huntington a personal favour once; and afterward, when Huntington was going to buy several million dollars' worth of steel rails, Andy went and told him he wanted the order and Huntington said he could have it? 'How could any one else compete with a situation like that?' Andy asked the committee. You see, he had a stand-in. He was the salesman, Andy was. Schwab and the other fellows were the steel men, but when it came to selling the goods

Andy was Johnny-on-the-spot, and a big part of his game was standing-in. See?"

"But how about that fiddle?"

"Well, I used to go around to farmers' houses one or two evenings a week with the fiddle, especially Saturday nights. Talk about a week-end! How is this for a week-end? Here is the sitting-room in a farmer's house on Saturday night. Over in one corner is the old farmer in his stocking feet, and in another corner is his wife with her knitting; and here are half a dozen kids and the hired man and hired girl sitting around listening, and a red-cheeked girl is in front of the organ playing an accompaniment, and right beside her is Pete with his fiddle playing 'Money Musk' and 'Old Zip Coon' and 'Virginia Reel,' and over there on the table is a pitcher of cider and some doughnuts and apples; can you beat that?"

"Would you enjoy it as much now, Pete?"

"What if I wouldn't? I enjoyed it then all right, and it gave me a stand-in. Would those people buy their groceries and boots and shoes and calico dresses from any one



"I enjoyed it then all right, and it gave me a stand-in"



else but Pete? Nit! That's what Andy meant when he ——"

"You seem to be on rather intimate terms with that gentleman," interrupted Pierce; "you must be acquainted with him."

"Why, sure, I know him. Everybody does."

"But does he know you?"

"Oh, well, as Abe Potash would say, that's something else again. I'd certainly like to meet the old geezer. When it comes to salesmanship, you've got to tie the blue ribbon on to Andy. Look at that sale he made to the Steel Trust! That was a bill of goods for your life, and he didn't cut prices either. He knew the value of a stand-in, too."

"But that fiddle, Pete?"

"Don't underestimate the fiddle. Didn't Senator Taylor get a stand-in all over the State of Tennessee by fiddling, and didn't he fiddle his way into the United States Senate?"

"Then you would advise a salesman to begin by taking violin lessons?"

"I'm not advising anything. I'm only telling you that I fiddled and got a stand-in, but I

had lots of other schemes too. I used to do things for people that I didn't have to do. It isn't hard to find ways to stand in if a fellow will go to it. They can say 'business is business,' but, all the same, you get about half of it on a stand-in. But, coming back to that country store, after I had been there about four years I began to want something bigger, so I tried for a job in a wholesale house. I got the travelling men to rooting for me. When a fellow has made good, why, people are always ready to boost him. The way to get a better job is to earn it in the job that you're at. I was offered a position with Dodd, Garrells & Co., a wholesale grocery company, and I took it. They paid me \$75 a month. I got \$45 in the country store. My new position was stock clerk. My work was to keep account of stock and figure profits and mark up selling prices for the travelling men. It gave me a great chance to get on to the line. The first thing I did after I got familiar with my work was to study the company. Business houses, you understand, are like individuals — no two are

alike, and each one has got some main idea back of it. The old man, Mr. Dodd, had once been a travelling salesman — a corking good one, too — and there were two things that he was buggy about: classy goods and classy salesmanship. I was lucky to get in with that company, because I wanted to go on the road some day and sell goods. Here's one way for a man to find his place: You take the thing that he wants to do most and believes he can do and wants to do it bad enough to make everything else knuckle down to it, why, it's dollars to doughnuts that that's his job. But he's got to pay the price. Well, I did the same in that wholesale house as I did in the country store. I hustled and I studied the business. A man makes good in a big job the same way as he does in a small one, only he gets bigger results. I went in to know as much about goods as the old man did. He was a regular cyclopædia on goods. There was a bully chance in that place to learn goods. They had experts in every department testing them out, and I spent lots of my spare time out in the sample-room learn-

ing all the wrinkles. A salesman wants to be dead on to his line or he can't show why his goods are the class. He doesn't need to talk about it very often either, but customers soon find out whether it's facts he gives them or hot air. It's a good thing to know a whole lot about your line and not talk much about the details unless you have to. People soon find out what a man knows. After a while I got well enough trusted to make suggestions to the old man about buying. He resented it when I first began to butt in, but when he found that I was on to the facts he paid more attention. I remember one season I was studying the peach crop, and it struck me that the crop was going on the bum. I got all the facts about crop conditions in Michigan and Georgia and California and compared stocks and markets with a few years previous, and it looked like a cinch that peaches would go up. I told the old man that I thought we'd better stock up heavy. He tried to cork me, but I had the jump on him. I had more facts than he had. He looked into it, and concluded that I was right, and we loaded up



heavy. Peaches did go up — about twenty cents a dozen — and we made a big profit, and that helped to get Pete solid with the company. I'm making two points here, Pierce; one is that it pays to dig into things and get at the facts, and the other is that I was a mighty bright boy."

"You must have been a real comfort to the firm," grinned Pierce.

"Sure I was. I can prove it. They raised my salary to one hundred dollars the second year. Another thing I did — I studied the salesmen. You know, when a fellow is ambitious to do a certain thing, the star men in that line look pretty big. The company had a good force of salesmen, and some of those fellows were the class. Every time a salesman came in off the road I used to watch him and talk with him every chance I had. Of course a man has got to learn to sell goods by selling them, and he's got to do it in his own way. It's a big mistake to imitate any one else. When a man is himself, he is genuine; but when he tries to be like some one else, he's a counterfeit,

and in the long run you can't counterfeit anything and get away with it. But you can learn a whole lot by watching men that know how to do the thing you want to do — especially if you get well acquainted. Take the two best salesmen we had. One of them, his name was Parsons, was the classiest talker I ever heard. Say, he could come across with the language! He could talk the arm off an Indian cigar sign. Every time he came in there would be a gabfest on until he went out. The other man, Fordham, was just the opposite. He was the quietest kind of a man. His specialty was keeping his mouth shut. He looked like General Grant, and always had a cigar in his mouth, and let the other fellow do all the talking. Parsons's way was to talk a customer into it, and Fordham's way was to let the customer talk himself into it, but they both got there. At first it used to puzzle me; but after I got well acquainted I saw how it was. They were both bully good fellows and they liked people. They were both on the square, too — men you could bank on; and they took good care of their

customers, and hustled, and were posted on every angle of the business. But there was something else about them both that you can't describe. They had a way with them that made you want to do what they wanted you to do. I remember one day I was going through the salesroom, and Parsons was in there holding up a bottle of Amigon olives and talking them up to a customer. I stopped and listened. I never liked olives; but all at once, while I was listening — I don't know — I wanted to eat an olive, and that noon I ate one, and have liked them ever since. Now, that's salesmanship — something inside of a man that gets the other fellow's goat and makes him want something that he thought he didn't want."

"Personal magnetism," suggested Pierce.

"You can call it that, but nobody knows what it is. Well, after I'd been in that wholesale house two years I thought it was time to strike for that job on the road. The old man asked me up to dinner one Sunday, and after dinner, when he lit a cigar and asked me how

I liked the business, I braced up and told him I wanted to go on the road. He asked what made me think I could sell goods; and I told him one reason was because I wanted to do it, and another was that I had sold lots of goods in the country store, and I believed I could do it on the road. 'But how about territory?' he said. 'We haven't anything open now but the river route, and of course you wouldn't want that.' That river route, you understand, was a bum proposition. It was a territory where there was competition from a dozen small jobbing towns as well as the large cities, and the merchants were hammered to death. Nobody had ever made a success of it for our house. But I had studied up about it and had a scheme. I pulled a map of the territory out of my pocket and showed the old man a number of country towns that were twelve to fifteen miles off the railway — places that our men had never worked much — and I had Bradstreet's ratings that showed some corking good country stores. I told the old man that I bet some good trade could be worked up among those country mer-

chants, and, as for the towns along the railway, it struck me that a fellow could make some money working our specialties till he got a foothold, and then go in for the general line. The old man leaned back and laughed, and I thought it was a good sign. He said he would speak to Mr. Garrells about it. A few days later he sent for me to come to his room, and Mr. Garrells was there. They asked me if I still wanted to go out on the river route, and I said I did. Mr. Garrells asked if I didn't think it rather hazardous for a young fellow to begin on such a hard territory, but I told him I'd rather tackle that than a territory where we had a big trade, because there was everything to win and nothing to lose, and I'd get some good experience, anyway. So they agreed to send me out at \$100 a month and expenses paid. Mr. Dodd asked when I could start, and I said any time, so he said I might start on the following Monday. When I got on the train the next Monday with my grip and sample case — say, I wouldn't have traded jobs with any man on earth. When I reached my first

town, I hiked right up to a grocery store run by a man named Smith, but when I stepped into the store all at once I lost my nerve and my mouth got dry and I had hard work telling Smith my name, but he was a good fellow and we got to chatting, and pretty soon my mouth got wet again. He said he didn't need any goods, but I got to telling him about our Amigon brand of plug tobacco. Amigon, you know, is our special brand. We put out all kinds of fancy groceries under that brand, and, you take it from me, when you see the word Amigon on an article don't you go any farther for quality. Amigon goods are the class. At that time, in order to introduce Amigon plug, we were offering a special deal — we gave a set of copper vinegar measures free with every five-butt order. Smith and I got to discussing different kinds of plug, and I found that I knew more about it than he did. I don't chew, you understand, but, if a man will chew, then I can give him some good reasons why he'd better chew Amigon plug, see? It was just my luck that Smith needed some new measures, and he finally ordered five butts of

the tobacco, and then I asked him if he didn't need a few other things to come along with it. When you get a man started, it's always easy to inch him along. He looked around and scraped me up quite an order. I remember just what it was: five butts of tobacco, two barrels of sugar, one sack of rice, and three cases of canned peaches. When I left that store, I was walking up in the air. That evening I sold five more butts of tobacco, and when I went to bed that night I was feeling pretty chesty. The next day I didn't sell a thing, and I soon discovered something about myself that made me feel mighty punk. You know I used to be kind of diffident, and —— ”

“Did you say diffident?” interrupted Pierce.

“That's what I said — diffident.”

“All right, go ahead.”

“I found that every time I approached a store I hated to go in and brace the proprietor, and occasionally I would cut it out just on that account — those merchants were pounded so hard, you know — and the worst of it was that whenever I got turned down, which was good

and plenty, the feeling kept growing on me. I saw that, if I was going to be a salesman, I'd have to get that kink out of me. I thought it all over, and saw that it was only a state of mind, just a wrong mental slant, you understand, so I began to talk to myself something like this: 'See here, Pete, you've the best line of goods in the country, and these merchants need your stuff. Competition is a good thing for them, because it keeps quality up and prices down. If there was a grocery trust, you'd soon see these merchants falling all over themselves to get the travelling men back.' I kept pumping my think-tank full of ideas like that, and kept plugging away selling goods, until after a while I got all over that diffident business."

"Yes, you got by all right."

"Then I soon learned another thing, and a mighty important thing for a salesman, too: You know there are two sides to every man you meet — some things about him that disgust you and some things that you can admire. It's a big help, in selling goods, to feel friendly toward people, to admire them and actually



like to meet them. It makes salesmanship twice as easy. Men always respond to it if it's the real goods. People are a bully good lot if you keep thinking about their good points and ——"

"That's all true enough, Pete, but you'll have to admit that some men are mighty yellow."

"Oh, sure! Some men are like buttermilk. I never could go buttermilk. It always made me gag. But a while ago I decided that buttermilk was a healthy drink, and so I forced myself to drink it. Every time just before I took a glass I'd stop and think what a rich, nutritious drink it is, and one of the most wholesome acids, and then I'd down it. After a while I got so I could bear it, and then I got to liking it, and now I'd rather drink buttermilk than anything else. You can do the same with a man as you can with buttermilk if you go to it, and it pays if a man is out to sell goods. Well, I stayed on that river route two years and made some money for the company, and then they gave me a better territory and have raised my salary

four times since. I've been in this territory eight years now, and, believe me, selling goods is a great business."

"Right you are, Pete. Let's go and shake for a buttermilk."

"I'll go you, but, say, Pierce, speaking about education —— "

"Oh, I'll admit it," laughed Pierce; "there's much to be said for codfish."

## CHAPTER II

### BOYHOOD

**L**ITTLE PETER CROWTHER was making pigeon tracks in the dust. He was doing this because he could think of nothing else to do. He was wishing that he might be somewhere else, but he did not know just where.

Thomas Carlyle, in one of his vociferous moods, was one day berating the common tendency of men to seek their highest good in some other place than the present. "Right here," he cried, "in this poor, miserable, despicable actual — here or nowhere is thine ideal."

Doubtless the "ideal" was here in the peace and quiet of this village and this summer day, and possibly the subconscious nature of Peter Crowther was in harmony with it, but the only sensation of which he was conscious was an

indefinite desire to be somewhere else, and so he was aimlessly making pigeon tracks in the dust.

Presently he caught sight of two men driving up to the tavern in a buckboard. They unloaded a tub and several large rolls of coarse-looking paper. A few moments later a series of flaming circus posters began to appear upon the side of the tavern barn.

Pete was on the alert. "Come on, Tommy!" he shouted to his younger brother. "Some men are putting up circus pictures on Devoe's barn!"

"Wait for me!" cried Tommy from within the house.

"Hurry up then."

The two boys ran up the road and halted at a safe distance.

"Do them men b'long to the circus, Pete?" whispered Tommy.

"Ask 'em."

"No, you ask 'em. You're the oldest."

"Say, mister," asked Pete, advancing toward the men with his hands in his pockets, "do you b'long to the circus?"

"Do we b'long to the circus?" repeated one of the bill-posters, as he paused and took a bite of plug tobacco, "Why, we own the circus, me and him," jerking his thumb toward his companion.

"Why don't you hire some one to do this work then?"

"My son," admonished the bill-poster gravely, "never hire nobody to do things that you can do yourself. Always run your business economical. That's how we made our money. Eh, Bill?"

"That's what," rejoined the other as he hit the barn a splat with his brush; "if we blowed our money in riding around in carriages the way Barnum and Forepaugh does, we wouldn't have no more property to-day than they've got."

In a short time the barn was covered with the pictures.

"Say, have you got all of these animals in your circus?" asked Pete a little incredulously.

"Why, these ain't half of 'em," responded the man. "We've got a sixteen-legged Gilligalloo bear that was captured last summer at Kala-

mazoo, and hundreds of other curiosities too num'rous to mention. Here, sonny, is a handbill that'll tell you all about it. Every word there is the honest truth."

"Say, Pete," cried Tommy, "let's go down on our stoop and you read it to me."

"All right. Come along."

They spread the handbill out upon the floor of the porch.

"A Panoramic Procession of Princely Pomp and Pageantry," it began.

"I can't read all of this; it's too hard," grumbled Pete.

"Jest read about the animals then," suggested Tommy.

"A Glorious Galaxy of Graceful Gazelles."

"Is this a gazelle, Pete?" pointing to a damsel dressed in a saucer skirt, balancing upon the back of a horse.

"No, that's a circus woman. These are the gazelles, I guess," indicating a group of zebras.

"Myriads of Magnificent Myrmidons of the Forest," continued Pete.

"Where are the marmidons?" asked Tommy.

"Here they are," pointing out a herd of giraffes that were pictured eating leaves off the tops of tall trees.

"Golly!" sighed Tommy as he gazed long and wistfully at the giraffes. "I'd like to see them, wouldn't you, Pete?"

"Say!" exclaimed Pete, suddenly, "one of them men said that the circus was going through here about three o'clock in the morning of the day it gets to Cedar Rapids. I'm going to get up and see it go through."

"Oh, bully! so be I," cried Tommy, scrambling to his feet. "I'll git up and see it go through, too!"

Those were the days when a circus travelled in wagons from town to town.

## II

It was early morning in the month of June. The dew was lying fresh and glistening upon the grass. The cattle were lowing in the farmyards as they began to start for pasture. The air was clear and fresh. It was a good morning for fishing. Down beyond the end of Sang's

lane at the edge of the woods the creek turned at a right angle. The boys called this the "Square Bend." There was a bunch of willows at the bend and the water was deep here, which made it a good fishing place. Across the creek was Nash's meadow, in which there was a marshy spot near the water where the grass grew rank and tall. It was toward this bend that Pete, with a fish-pole over his shoulder and a can of angle worms in his hand, was directing his steps. Beside the willows there was a large stone upon which he took his seat, and, after hooking an angle worm and spitting copiously upon it, he "dropped in."

Flocks of songbirds came out of the woods and hovered about the willows. The larks over in the meadow were swinging and singing upon the tall grasses. At the upper end of the meadow Mr. Nash and his men had commenced haying, and the irregular sound of the mowing machine came faintly across the field. Beetles and "Devil's Darning Needles" were darting and buzzing through the air. It would seem as if Pete, who was a wholesome, hearty boy,



should have been filled with a keen sense of exultation, but such was hardly the case. He was not wholly oblivious to the ideality of his environment, particularly when the "bobber" went under, and yet he was mainly intent upon killing time. To him this whole situation was somewhat of a "poor, miserable, despicable actual." He was impatient for the hours to fly and the shades of evening to fall, so that the dawn of the next morning might appear. The circus was going through the village in the morning.

## III

"Come there, sleepy-head, wake up," urged Pete, giving Tommy another shake. "You'll have to hustle if you want to see the circus go by."

"Lemme be," grunted Tommy; "I guess I won't git up."

"All right. If you'd rather sleep than see live elephants, why jest stay there."

At the word "elephants" Tommy sat up in bed. "Wait for me, Pete," he muttered, rubbing his eyes with his fist. "Where's my

clothes — you've gone and got my clothes all mixed up."

"I hain't either," retorted Pete; "here they are on the floor where you left 'em. Jump up and I'll help you put 'em on."

Presently the boys stole quietly downstairs and out of doors. It was quite dark, although the waning moon gave a faint light. The frogs over in Pike's pasture were still croaking their night song. It looked as if morning were a long way off. A thick fog hung suspended over the village, and the air seemed heavy with a kind of chilly silence that made Tommy shiver. Pete climbed the gate-post and looked up the road, listening intently.

"Be they coming?" whispered Tommy. "Is the circus coming, Pete?"

"I can't hear anything," Pete replied.

"I bet it's gone through," said Tommy, with a yawn. "We might just as well stay'd abed."

"It ain't gone through, either," Pete retorted impatiently; "I was awake most all night and I'd 'a' heard it. You can go back to bed if you want to. I'm going to wait."

A dull haze of light began to appear in the East, and just then an almost imperceptible rumble came from the direction of the *Waterloo* road.

"Did you hear that, Tommy?"

"No"

"Wal, I did; there it goes again!"

This time the sound was unmistakable. The boys were on a keen edge. Pete sprang down from the post and immediately climbed back again and stood up on it. Tommy ran out into the road and back. Both were straining their eyes up the roadway and muttering indistinctly.

Just then the dim outlines of a four-horse team appeared drawing a large square canvas-covered wagon, and behind it was some kind of a procession.

Pete scrambled down from the post. "That's it!" he gasped excitedly. "That's the circus, Tommy!" and they both crouched trembling behind the fence.

There was a pitch-hole in the road opposite the gate, and as the huge wagon came bowling

along a front wheel went into the hole and the wagon gave a violent lurch, whereupon there came from the inside a spiteful snarl that made Tommy grab hold of Pete's jacket.

"Gee whiz! what's that, Pete?"

"It sounds like a Royal Bengal tiger," whispered Pete. "Keep still now or they'll hear you."

Then followed a long line of canvas-covered wagons drawn by four-horse teams.

"Oh, jiminy, Pete!" look there up the road!"

The sight that now met Pete's eyes made the shivers run over him. Nearly obscured in the dim fog and dust he could see six or eight monstrous, unwieldy creatures moving rapidly and noiselessly down the road, and as they drew nearer out of the morning dusk it seemed as if they were just emerging from their native jungle.

"Them's elephants!" muttered Pete in a low tone. "Keep still now! They'd snatch a feller bald-headed quicker'n he could say Jack Robinson!"

As they were passing the gate one of the elephants separated from the herd. A roughly dressed man with an iron prod in his hand ran around from behind and gave him two or three jabs in the side, at which the elephant gave a squeal of pain and turned quickly back into the herd.

"Golly!" sighed Tommy in relief, as the elephants passed on, "I should think he'd be afraid to punch a elephant that way."

Some more canvas-covered wagons followed and after them came a string of trick ponies.

"Oh, Pete! Look there behind the ponies! I guess them's the marmidons coming."

A herd of camels and dromedaries now hove in sight and began to swing past.

"Them's camels. Shet up now and don't make so much noise."

Pete was irritated at Tommy's prattle. His own emotions were too deep for words. He had seen pictures of desert caravans and his imagination was now exalted to a high tension as he watched the camels striding past carrying with them the very atmosphere of Arabia. It was

hard to believe that live camels from the other end of the world were walking along out there in the road where he played every day barefooted.

Presently the last wagon pulled up. It was an immense affair drawn by six horses. The driver was perched on a high seat, and beside him sat a boy about Pete's age. He was smoking a cigarette and was chatting in a shrill voice with the driver, who was paying little attention to him. As the wagon passed the gate Pete stepped outside. The Circus Boy suddenly looked around and caught sight of him. They exchanged glances. Just then one of the front wheels lurched into the pitch-hole. The driver, who was nearly asleep, roused himself and gave the leaders a crack with the whip and the wagon rolled past.

It was hard to realize that the circus had really gone by. Tommy peered cautiously through the gate and stepped outside. Pete climbed the gate-post and watched the rear wagons move up the hill. There was something so cosmopolitan about the movement of

the whole thing — the swing of the big wagons, the stride of the camels, and the swagger look of the Circus Boy smoking a cigarette — something so suggestive of a wide life, a great world outside of this little village, that Pete's nature was deeply stirred.

"Come on, Pete; I'm going back to bed," said Tommy, passing into the house.

"All right," sighed Pete as he jumped down from the post.

He paused outside the door and took a parting look at the rear wagon. The form of the Circus Boy was silhouetted sharply against the dawning light of the eastern sky as the wagon disappeared over the crest of the hill toward the city.

"Golly! I bet he has a bully time," sighed Pete. "Every day he sees the big cities and hears the brass bands play, and prob'ly he rides in the parades. Some day I'm going to travel round to the big cities myself and do something — something" — he did not know what.

As the wagon was moving up the hill the Circus Boy turned and glanced back toward

40      PETE CROWTHER, SALESMAN

the village. Here and there the smoke was beginning to curl lazily from the cottage chimneys. The roosters in the outlying farmyards were commencing to crow vigorously. Over across the village common stood the little white Methodist Church, the tip of whose spire reflected the tint of the coming dawn. A wave of revolt surged through the mind of the Circus Boy. It was an inarticulate protest against being robbed of the normal privileges of boyhood. He caught a parting glimpse of Pete standing outside the cottage door.

"Gee! I'd like to be that kid!" he muttered to himself. "He lives at home with his folks, and every night he can sleep in a bed, and every day he can go fishing and swimming."

"I know what I'm going to do," said he aloud to the driver.

"What are you going to do?"

"Some day I'm going to quit this circus and go out in the country somewhere and live. That's what I'm going to do."

"So?" responded the driver.



## CHAPTER III

### PETE'S DIAGNOSIS

**I**T WAS a favourite assertion of John Alexander Dowie in the days of his vigour and power that "sickness comes from the devil." Later on, when sickness got hold of Mr. Dowie himself, he grew less emphatic in the assertion, and yet we have no public record that he ever changed his mind.

Upon reflection it will be seen that, from the standpoint of diagnosis, this theory is not without its advantages, especially in these latter days when the personality of the devil has become such a nebulous matter — almost equivalent, in fact, to "error of mortal mind," which, in point of nebulosity, would seem to be in a class all by itself.

When, upon a certain afternoon in May, Tom Barlow passed through his front gate

and started toward the village after his mail, it would seem at a casual glance that he should have been in a joyous mood. It was a sunshiny day. The fields and trees were bursting into foliage and bloom. It was good growing weather, and Tom's farm presented a thrifty appearance. And yet he was not in a joyous mood. Quite to the contrary, his whole attitude was one of gloom and despondency. The reason for this would be seen upon closer inspection, for he had the sallow skin and weary eye of one who had made a formal surrender to a state of ill health. As he glanced across his well-tilled fields his eyes took on a momentary gleam of interest, which, however, quickly faded into weariness in response to an inward suggestion of physical ill-being. He was having one of his bad days.

Barlow's farm was about a mile from the village. His road led him past the home of Miss Amanda Perkins and her sister Belle. As Tom was passing the house Amanda was peering at him through the window-blinds. It was part of her daily task to keep tab upon

the passers-by and make appropriate comments. "Land sakes! there goes Tom Barlow!" she exclaimed. "He looks as if he was feeling worse than usual to-day. He's smoking that old pipe, of course. They say that when he ain't smoking he's chewing, but I never seen him when he wasn't smoking. No wonder he's sick!"

"Maybe it ain't tobacco that makes him sick," objected Belle. "There's lots of healthy people that use tobacco."

"Tom Barlow himself admits that it's bad," Amanda argued. "I was over there the other evening, and heard him tell Johnny that tobacco was bad for a boy, and that he mustn't use it until he was grown up. I'd like to know how anything that's bad for Johnny can be good for Johnny's pa."

"Perhaps when a man is grown up he can stand it without hurting him," Belle persisted.

"Stand what? Don't that show that there's something to stand? There's no use talking, Belle, tobacco is a poison. Ten drops of nicotine on the tongue of a cat will kill the cat."

"I've heard that said lots of times, but I never seen it tried."

"Well, if you will get near Uncle Hiram some time when he is cleaning his brier pipe and get a good sniff of that, you won't need to have it tried on a cat."

Undoubtedly Amanda had a point here. Any experienced smoker who has had occasion to clean out a well-used pipe, or who has endeavoured by a vigorous process of suction to remove the obstructing sediment which has suddenly yielded and deposited itself in his mouth, will readily concede that, if this were to be abruptly deposited upon the tongue of an inexperienced and unsuspecting cat, it would result in instant demise.

"Maybe if a cat would go at it gradual, the way a man does, he could get used to it," suggested Belle. "Take that big tomcat of Larson's that prowls around here — don't you think he could?"

"Now, Belle, don't get funny. You know perfectly well that an animal won't use tobacco, and you know, too, that tobacco is downright

nasty. And how can anything that's nasty be healthy?"

Belle made no further reply. In reality, her views were in harmony with those of Amanda, and, as she had prevented the question from going by default, she was now quite willing that the final word should be anti-tobacco.

"If Tom Barlow would throw away that pipe and bury that plug of tobacco," concluded Amanda, firmly, "he would soon be as healthy as anybody."

In the meantime Tom had been plodding dejectedly along toward the village. Just now he was passing the farm residence of young Mr. and Mrs. Jim Gardner. It so happened that at this time Jim and his wife were engaged in a warm discussion of the only subject that ever disturbed the serenity of their home life. Jim was a robust and prosperous young farmer who two years before this had married Edna Garland, one of the daughters in a neighbouring family. Edna had always been in frail health. As she grew up it seemed evident that she would never be strong enough to work like other girls,

so it was decided to give her an education, and thus place her beyond the necessity of doing any work. She was accordingly sent to a neighbouring city and graduated from the high school. This combination of culture and fragile health appealed strongly to Jim Gardner. Edna became his ideal. The dream of his life was to become her husband and devote his vigorous personality to her happiness and welfare. He had health enough for both. It was the day of his life when he led her to the altar and took upon himself the vow to care for and protect her.

After they began to adjust themselves to the exigencies of married life there occurred one of those strange reversals of human expectations that are difficult to foresee, for it was Edna who proceeded to take care of Jim. It came about in this way. Edna, although frail in body, was possessed of a determined spirit. Long ago she had definitely decided to make no surrender to invalidism. Her chief difficulty had been a weak digestion and feeble circulation. She therefore made a thorough study of foods and nutritive values, and carefully experimented

until she found a dietary that proved beneficial. She also pursued a system of physical culture which included plenty of out-of-door exercise, deep breathing, and pure water. By patiently following this regimen she had gradually developed a fair degree of health, which was steadily improving. It was quite natural, therefore, that when she found herself in charge of a household of her own she should wish to order its affairs along lines of rational living — especially in the matter of nutrition. She accordingly began to feed Jim upon those things that he ought to eat and which involved a radical change in his dietary. Jim took it all good-naturedly so far as dinner and supper were concerned. He was proud of Edna's knowledge of dietetics, and was glad to please her. In fact, anything prepared by her possessed for him a peculiar charm by reason of that fact, and, so long as there was plenty of it, he cheerfully ate raw vegetables, nuts, fruits, macerated wheat, and various "near meat" preparations without murmuring — that is, at dinner and supper. But when it came to breakfast, that was a different

matter. Breakfast was Jim's "best holt." He had always been accustomed to a breakfast consisting principally of fried pork, hot buckwheat cakes, and sorghum — a combination of dietetic horrors that Edna could not for a moment tolerate, but of which Jim was very fond. It was hard for him to get reconciled to the loss of his favourite breakfast. Edna patiently went over the matter with him again and again. She explained to him in detail all about calories, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, and pointed out the respective functions of saliva and pancreatic juice, to all of which he listened with rapt admiration, for it was a constant gratification to him that he was privileged to be the husband of such a talented girl. The only thing he lacked to make his cup of happiness overflow was the restoration of his old-time breakfast.

He made no attempt to answer her arguments upon technical grounds, for he was as ignorant of the science of nutrition as a fish is of the theory of swimming, but he invariably fell back upon the assertion that "it never done



me any harm." And whenever, at the close of one of Edna's demonstrations, he would make this allegation and offer in support of it his Exhibit A, which was his own proper person, he instinctively felt that he had made a strong case, for he was blessed with a degree of he 'th that amounted almost to vulgarity.

They had just reached this point in the discussion when Edna caught sight of Tom passing along the roadway, and immediately a new point in her favour suggested itself. "There goes Tom Barlow," said she. "Poor fellow, he has such miserable health! Do you know what ails him, Jim? I believe I do. Mrs. Barlow told me the other day that their breakfast the year around consists of fried pork, buckwheat cakes and sorghum — the very things that you wish. She said that Tom is very fond of these things and always eats a hearty breakfast. That is just what ails him, Jim. It is a case of malnutrition, pure and simple. His system is full of toxins. If he would eat wholesome food and properly

regulate the quantity, his health would very soon become normal."

Ordinarily this point would have put Jim out of the argument, but sometimes there come, even to the dullest of us, flashes of inspiration that help us out of tight corners, and this is what now happened to Jim.

"Yes," he quickly responded, "but how about Mrs. Barlow and the boys? They eat the same kind of breakfast he does and they are never sick!"

It was true that Mrs. Barlow was never known to be ill, and, as for the boys, they were among the huskiest in the village school. There was a reason for this, not mentioned by Edna or Jim, and which, in the interest of truth, should probably be stated here. It had long been an established custom in the Barlow household that all mention of symptoms and physical disabilities should be the exclusive prerogative of Tom. Early in their married life Mrs. Barlow had discovered that it was better so, and from their childhood she had frequently admonished the boys. "When anything ails ye, jest keep

it to yourself; you know how it stirs father up," which, indeed, it did. The slightest suggestion of a symptom from any of the others was sure to bring forth from Tom a rising tide of symptoms, pains, aches, and internal maladjustments in comparison with which their insignificant ailment was clearly unworthy of notice. As a result of this the rest of the family had long since ceased to admit, even in their thoughts, that there could possibly be anything the matter with them; and thus, in obedience to that strange law of our nature whereby when our physical ailments are in their incipient and nebulous state they require the shock of specific description and frequent complaint to precipitate them into reality, whereas if held in a state of solution by vigorous repression and denial and subjected to the sunshine of a persistent optimism they are more than likely to evaporate into thin air, Mrs. Barlow and the boys were always well. Tom accounted for it on the ground that, "Mother is naturally wiry, and the boys take after her." This fact, however, was quite aside from the point Edna was mak-

ing, and when Jim cited the case of Mrs. Barlow and the boys she offered no further reply, but heaved a sigh and turned to her work, thus leaving the matter in its usual state of deadlock.

Tom had now come within sight of the village store, which was also the post-office. Out upon the front steps were Pete Crowther, the clerk, and Bill Carney, one of the customers, engaged in a desultory conversation.

"Hello, there comes Tom Barlow," said Pete. "He walks as if he was all in. He must be worse to-day."

"What do you s'pose ails the old galoot?" asked Bill.

"You can search me."

"But you sell him lots of patent medicine. You ought to know something about it."

"Yes, I sell him lots of dope, but that don't mean that I know what ails him. I ain't a doctor."

Bill persisted. "You've got an idee, hain't you?"

"Yes, I've got an idea, if you must know; I believe all that ails Tom Barlow is in his mind."

"In his mind! Why sure, there is something else ails him. See how yellor he looks."

"That may be caused by what's in his mind. The more I think about it, the more I believe that most of the things that ail us ain't there at all."

"How about that boil you had on your neck last month? Was that only an idee?" grinned Bill.

"That was a socker of a boil, wasn't it?" mused Pete, reminiscently. "But I'll tell you something about that boil. The first day it got so bad I stayed at home with it, and the blamed thing pained me so all day it 'most drove me crazy. The next morning it was still just as bad, but I come down to the store and got busy and put it out of my mind. I wouldn't think about it at all, and most of that day I didn't know I had any boil. Now where was that boil when I didn't feel it and didn't know I had one?"

"On the back of your neck," answered Bill promptly.

"It wasn't there to me."

"It would have been if some one had hit it a swat."

"Oh, well, I ain't saying exactly that there wasn't any boil at all, you understand; but I put it out of business, all the same, by thinking about something else. If a man can do that with a big boil that is in plain sight, what could he do with something inside of him that he can't see, and that may not be there at all!"

"Yes, but when something goes wrong inside of a man he can feel it. When I had that liver trouble last spring, I couldn't see it, but you bet I could feel it!"

"Maybe that was all in your mind. Say, Bill, you dassent bet the cigars that you've got a liver at all."

"Dassent bet the cigars I've got a liver!" gasped Bill. "I'll go you."

"All right. Prove it."

"Why — why, every galoot has got a liver!" insisted Bill, warmly.

"Prove it."

"Well, when anything is the matter with it you can feel it."

"How do you know it's a liver you feel? It may be something else."

A bright idea occurred to Bill. "See here, Pete, I can prove it this way: every time you kill a beef you find a liver in it."

"Yes, but a beef has got horns and a tail, too. That don't prove that a man has."

Bill grew irritated. It was bad enough to be called upon for tangible proof of such a self-evident fact as the existence of a man's own liver, but to have all his evidence arbitrarily ruled out was exasperating.

"See here, young feller," said he, threateningly, "ain't you gitting pretty fresh? Do you mean to say that I ain't got no liver when I tell you that I have got one?"

Bill was big and muscular. Pete perceived that the time for diplomacy had arrived. "Well, what you say about a beef may be some proof, and maybe I owe you the cigar, but now you see, Bill, if it's as hard as all that to prove that a man has got a liver, how much harder it is to prove that there is something the matter with it."

"That's right," assented Bill, complacently, as he lighted the cigar. "It was a dang sight harder to prove than I thought it would be."

"The thing for a man to do," continued Pete, "is to go ahead and act as if everything inside of him was all right, and generally it will be that way. The trouble with Tom is he thinks everything inside of him is all wrong. You can make him believe he's got 'most anything. I don't know what he thinks ails him to-day, but I bet that in less than five minutes I can make him think it's something else, and I won't say a word to him about it either."

"How?"

"Well, here is a circular that tells about a new medicine we just got in — Dobb's Indian Root Compound. It's for kidney complaint. I will put it down here on the counter where Tom will see it. You keep your eye on him."

Tom now entered the store and nodded to Pete and Bill.

"How's everything up your way, Mr. Barlow?" inquired Pete.



"Oh, the crops is all right, but I ain't feeling any too well."

Pete assumed an air of sympathetic interest. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"Oh, my stummick is all out o' *kilter*. Is there any mail for me?"

Tom leaned idly against the counter while Pete was sorting the mail. Presently his eye fell upon the circular lying before him, which read as follows:

When you awake in the morning, do you have a furry taste in the mouth? Is your appetite fitful and uncertain? When you rise suddenly do you have a flash of dizziness? Do you have dull pains in the lower region of your back? Have a care! The seeds of disease are in your system! Your kidneys are undoubtedly deranged! Take Dobbs' Indian Root Compound. It flushes and renovates the kidneys and makes red blood. Read the following testimonials.

Tom picked up the circular, and, going down by the stove, seated himself upon a cracker-box and began carefully to scan the testimonials.

Pete glanced up from the pack of letters and shot a wink across at Bill, who shook his head significantly.

Presently Tom arose and beckoned Pete down to the lower counter. "Say, Pete, do you keep Dobbsses Injun Root — er — er —— "

"Compound?" assisted Pete.

"Yes, Dobbsses Compound?"

"You bet, and it's a crackajack medicine, too. How many bottles you want?"

"How do you sell it?"

"One dollar a bottle; six bottles for five dollars."

"Well, say, Pete if I buy one bottle now and it does me good, can I come and get the other five bottles for four dollars?"

"Sure, and you will want them, too. That medicine goes right to the spot."

Tom pulled out his wallet and paid for the medicine, and, gathering up his mail, started wearily back toward home.

"What did I tell you?" said Pete as soon as Tom got beyond earshot.

Bill shook his head in profound disgust. "Do you s'pose he will come after the other five bottles?"

Pete leaned over the counter and spat through

his teeth at Carney's dog. "Can a duck swim?" said he.

It would seem that this narrative ought not to close without indicating which one of these diagnoses was correct, but that would be a difficult matter to determine. Probably the truth lay in a combination of all three, leaving, however, a reasonable margin for the operation of that mysterious and malevolent agency that Mr. Dowie called the devil; for who would be so dogmatic as to assert that the devil had nothing to do with this case?

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTENTMENT, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SALESMANSHIP

**I**N ONE of his lectures to students on "Life's Ideals" Professor William James advanced the idea that the real value of any situation in life depends not so much upon its inherent or objective quality as upon the feelings which the thought of that situation arouses within us. "If we were feelingless," said he, "and ideas were the only things our minds could entertain, then no one set of circumstances would possess for us any greater desirability than another." In other words, it is the nature of one's feelings rather than the nature of his circumstances *per se* that makes life significant. Conceding, for the sake of this narrative, the soundness of this proposition, it will doubtless find some points of practical application as we proceed.

## I — CONTENTMENT

Song-Lee was the owner and proprietor of a store and restaurant in the city of Omaha, Neb. It was a modest affair kept in a one-story shanty upon a side street. There were two rooms in the building, one a dining-room and the other a kitchen. The store part consisted of a few shelves of canned goods. A small sleeping-space was partitioned off at one end of the kitchen by a curtain. Song was not only the proprietor of this place; he was also the cook, cashier, waiter, steward, dishwasher, and scrubber. The only help he employed was a Chinese boy who occasionally assisted in serving meals.

His patronage was quite as modest as his outfit. He served about twelve people at each meal. However, he considered this a good, fair business, which indeed it was, considering the size of his plant. To most people such a sphere in life might seem somewhat undesirable. The daily round of work in this little shack, with all its monotonous details of frying meat, boiling

potatoes, washing dishes, and scrubbing floors, would appear to an ambitious mind to be little less than serfdom; but it did not look that way to Song. To him it was an attractive situation, and one which aroused in his mind a constant feeling of the most lively satisfaction.

There were good reasons for this: He had not always been a resident of the United States. He was a coolie from the province of Quantung, China. He was one of a family of fourteen children, and from his earliest recollection his lot had been one of hard toil and scanty subsistence. At about the age of twenty he came in contact with one Hoo-Sam, a laundryman from Lincoln, Neb., who had returned to China upon a visit to his parents. Hoo-Sam told Song all about America, and in due time, after much persistent effort, Song reached and entered the United States and located at Omaha. His first employment was in a laundry. He saved his money until he had accumulated enough to buy a few tables, chairs, dishes, and kitchen utensils, and also pay a month's rent upon this shanty. His sign was out above the

door: "Song-Lee, Chicago Store and Restaurant."

He still worked early and late, as he had been accustomed to do in China; but here it was different. He was working for himself now, and he was slowly gathering a surplus. There was a profit. After deducting all of his expenses, including rent, food, fuel, and supplies of all kinds, there was a net profit of about two and one half cents per meal, which, at thirty-six meals per day, gave him ninety cents clear. Part of this money he deposited in the bank — but not all. He kept part of it in cash upon his person. While he enjoyed the privilege of drawing checks upon the bank, he also enjoyed the manual possession of a roll of bills. At the time of which we write he had \$150 on deposit in the bank and \$90 cash in his pocket. A good proportion of this cash consisted of one and two dollar bills. Song preferred it that way. He preferred five one-dollar bills to one five-dollar bill. He knew, of course, that they did not represent any more value, but they increased the size of his roll. To fully appreciate his view-

point one should take \$90 and convert it into one, two, and five dollar bills — say thirty ones, ten twos, and eight fives — and arrange them in a roll, mixing the twos and fives at irregular intervals, but placing two fives upon the outside next to a couple of twos. Then place a rubber band around it, and notice the sensation of well-being that suffuses the mind when one holds the roll in his hand.

Possibly it may not affect every one in this way, but that is how it made Song feel.

The matter also had its social aspects. When local merchants presented their bills they regarded Song and his money with a degree of deference that was most gratifying to him, and when they met him on the street they greeted him pleasantly — so inevitably does the reputed possession of worldly goods act as an open-sesame to the good graces and kindly regard of our fellow-citizens. Some people affect stylish clothes in order to excite the admiration and envy of others; some display automobiles, and others fine houses; but Song used cash. There are few things more potent and compelling than



a large roll of currency, and thus he had his reward. During his busy hours a sense of increasing opulence filled the background of his consciousness, and in his leisure moments it occupied the foreground of his thoughts, thus shedding a radiance over the details of his business that made him feel good no matter what he might be doing. Even in his sleep it pervaded his subconscious mind, and caused his dreams to be permeated with an atmosphere of complacency and satisfaction.

Upon a certain July day in the year 1906, at about the hour of 11 A. M., Song was seated upon a soap-box in his kitchen paring potatoes for dinner. We must leave him here for a while, which we can do with full assurance that he will not idle any during our absence.

Among his associates he was said to be somewhat cautious, suspicious, and rather indifferent to truth; but no one had ever accused him of being lazy.

## II — PSYCHOLOGY

The East-bound passenger train was rumbling its way over the prairie toward the city of

Omaha. Two passengers in the smoking-apartment of the Pullman were engaged in conversation. They were talking about travel in Nebraska. One of them, a college professor, was somewhat caustic in his statements.

"It is hard to travel with any degree of comfort through a country like this," he said.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the other. "I go through here every three months, and I find it pretty comfortable."

"Commercial traveller?" inquired the professor.

"Yes, my name is Pete Crowther. I sell groceries."

"Speaking about commercial travelling," said the professor, "I fear that I wouldn't enjoy trying to sell goods. The very thought of travelling about soliciting orders gives me a sensation of dread and fatigue."

"In that case it would be a poor business for you to tackle. It all depends on how it makes a man feel."

"True," laughed the professor. "You are

quite in accord with what Professor James says in one of his books."

"Never heard of him," said Pete, "but I'm glad he agrees with me. What did he say?"

"Why, substantially the same as you just said. He takes the position that the real value of a man's situation depends upon the feelings that it excites within him."

"Sure, that's so; but one reason why I like this business is because I can do it. Every man has his particular stunt — his specialty, you understand."

"Yes, you mean his preëminent faculty. It was Emerson, I believe, who said that every man has his distinctive contribution to make to society."

"That's it! And every man likes to do his special stunt — isn't that so?"

"Undoubtedly our chief enjoyment is found in the exercise of our distinctive faculties."

"Sure!" cried Pete. "And when a man has a way of getting people to buy goods, why, every time he tackles a man he is playing his own game, working his specialty. There is just as much

enjoyment in that for him as there is for a teacher or preacher or merchant doing what he can do best."

"I dare say you are correct," admitted the professor, "and I presume that one reason why that kind of work doesn't appeal to me is because it isn't my stunt, as you put it. But here is an interesting question: How far can a man make it his stunt? You know there is much being written these days about the psychology of salesmanship."

"Psychology! I thought that psychology was something they taught in college, like astronomy. What has that got to do with selling goods?"

"It has much to do with it. I have just read a book by one of our psychologists in which he devoted a whole chapter to salesmanship. He contended that any man of ordinary parts could become a salesman if he would follow a certain psychological programme."

"He did, did he? What was his programme?"

"I don't remember all of his points, but they

were something like this: First of all, one should fill his mind with confident thoughts concerning the excellence of his company. Cultivate a firm belief in the superiority of his line of goods. Insist constantly to himself that he has the best goods and the best company, and saturate his mind with facts and arguments to that effect."

"Sure," said Pete; "a man would be a chump not to root for his own house. What else did he say?"

"He said to idealize one's work. Insist in his thoughts that his task is important and necessary. Never harbour an apologetic thought about his business. Magnify his occupation."

"That's all right," asserted Pete; "a man couldn't sell goods if he sneaked around like a yellow dog. I don't see what all that has got to do with psychology. That's nothing but common sense. What else did he say?"

"He said that one should train himself into a firm belief in his capacity to perform his task. Let him cultivate a mental attitude of superiority. When he approaches a man look him squarely in

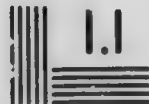


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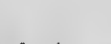
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the eye with full confidence in his ability to sell him goods, and let there be a constant mental suggestion emanating from him to that effect."

"In other words," said Pete, "get stuck on yourself. Oh, I guess there is something in that, if a man don't get too conceited. People like to see a man who is sure of himself. Anything else?"

"He said to keep steadily at it all day, holding these thoughts persistently in mind, and success will eventually come. His theory might be summed up in this way: A man's thoughts tend to objectivize themselves, and ——"

"Hold on! I've slipped the trolley. What is that objectivize?"

"Why, a man's thoughts tend to produce concrete results in harmony with ——"

"Wait! Are concrete results any different from other results?"

The professor laughed good-naturedly.

"No, just call it results. A man's thoughts tend to result as he thinks."

"But supposing a man is no good?" objected Pete. "Take one of these fellows that doesn't



know how to do things. Could he sell goods by just jollying himself up like that? Not on your life! Why, I know a fellow ——”

“Just a moment, please,” interrupted the professor. “What is it that makes a man no good, as you express it? Isn’t it, first of all, his own state of mind? He concedes in his own thought that he is a failure. He doesn’t believe in himself. You will seldom have occasion to call a man no good who really believes in himself.”

“Well, how is a man going to believe in himself when he is no good? He hasn’t got anything to believe in. Here is a man who can’t sell goods — just simply can’t. He hasn’t got the way with him — doesn’t talk right — can’t see the point — makes people tired. Do you mean to say that he could do business if he would only fill his mind with hot air? Nit. Why, he’d have to make himself all over.”

“Precisely. And modern psychology tells a man that this can be done. First of all, he must make himself over in his own thought. He must change his mental measurement of himself; then, under the constant stimulus of

his new viewpoint, he will begin to develop those dormant faculties that tend to make him what he thinks."

"How is he going to work to do all that?" asked Pete, sarcastically. "Did that writer tell how?"

"Yes, he said it must be done chiefly by auto-suggestion."

"Auto-what?"

"Auto-suggestion. Filling one's own mind with positive thoughts and mental images. Especially flooding the subconscious mind with ——"

"Wait! I don't catch on. What is that subconscious mind?"

"Why, the subliminal region of the mind that lies below the threshold of the consciousness."

"Aw, come off, Professor! You talk like a man with bats in his belfry."

"If you will tell me what you mean by belfry," smiled the professor, "and if by that you mean the mind, then tell me where the mind is located, and what its constituent elements are, we may then have a better basis for definition."

"No, I guess I'll pass," said Pete, scratching his head reflectively. "There's no use tackling a man on his specialty. Subconscious mind goes. What about it? How does a man get at it?"

"By auto-suggestion; that is, by insisting upon these things in his own thoughts. Flooding the mind with ideas and suggestions to that effect. Picturing one's self in his thought as he wishes to be, and insisting that he is that. A good time to do it is at night just before going to sleep. The subconscious mind will finally get saturated with these ideas, and begin to impel one to act accordingly. It will become a positive force in his life, and help him to overcome temperament. That is the theory of that writer, Mr. Crowther."

"Then, if I understand it, he means to say that if a man who is no good — who can't sell goods — will go through all that monkey work, then, after that, he can sell goods!" said Pete in disgust.

"He insists that it would be a positive help in that direction, and a most efficient force in his life."

"Well, I'd rather take my chances batting my ear for a good night's sleep when I go to bed."

"Omaha!" announced the porter. "We are pulling into Omaha. Brush, sir?"

"This is where I get off," said Pete. "Glad I met you, Professor. I'll think about that subconscious mind."

"And keep on batting your ear, no doubt, when you go to bed," laughed the other.

"Sure," said Pete. "So long."

About half an hour later Pete was standing in front of the leading hotel looking up and down the street with the self-satisfied air of one who is about to exercise his favourite function.

### III — SALESMANSHIP

Pete paused at the street-crossing as his eye rested upon a sign down the side street. "Song-Lee, Chicago Store and Restaurant."

"I wouldn't wonder if that Chink used considerable coffee," mused he. "I guess I'll go over and chin him a while."

He pushed his way through the dining-room

into the kitchen. Song was still seated upon the soap-box paring potatoes for dinner.

"Good-morning," saluted Pete.

"Good-morning."

"Where's the boss?"

"Boss he gone away," lied Song. "What you want?"

"I want to see the boss. Where has he gone?"

"Gone to Chicago."

"When will he come back?"

"Mebbe two days; mebbe four days. What you want?"

"I want to sell him some coffee."

"Boss he no want coffee."

"How do you know he don't? See here, your name is Song-Lee. You the boss. Eh! what!"

Song grinned placidly. "What kind of coffee you sell?"

"Good coffee, eighteen cents," said Pete, producing a sample.

"Good coffee, eighteen cent?" repeated Song, inquiringly, as he fingered the sample.

"Yes, and we pay the freight."

"You pay flate?"

"Sure we deliver it. We pay freight."

"Good coffee, eighteen cent, you pay flate," repeated Song again, as if it were too good to be true.

Pete took out his order-book and pencil. "How big a barrel you want?" he asked. "How much; how many pounds?"

"Don't want any," said Song, abruptly, resuming his seat upon the soap-box.

"Don't want any?" cried Pete in amazement. "When you can get good coffee eighteen cent, why you no want any?"

Song shook his head. "Got plenty coffee," said he.

"How much you got?"

"Got four hundred pounds."

"Where is it?"

"Some of it there," pointing to a drum in the corner.

Pete went over and shook the drum.

"Why that's only a fifty-pound drum, and it ain't half full. Where's the rest?"

"Down to depot," smiled Song, blandly.

"What! are you paying the railway company storage on coffee? Nix! that won't work. You only got twenty-five pound coffee. Now, why you no want coffee?"

"Me git good coffee seventeen cent."

"Let's see some of it."

Song dipped up a saucerful and handed it over. Pete examined it carefully, smelled of it, and looked up at Song with a sarcastic grin. "So, that's your good coffee, seventeen cent, is it?"

"Plitty good coffee," asserted Song, uneasily.

"Why, that no coffee at all!" shouted Pete in disgust. "That nothing but peas and chicory! You savvy, Song? No coffee! Nix coffee! That all peas and chicory!"

"All peas and chickly," echoed Song, vaguely.

"Sure! no coffee at all!"

"Make plitty good coffee," insisted Song, again.

"Why, if you like that stuff, I sell you all same twelve cents."

"You sell all same twelve cent?" inquired Song, eagerly. "You send me ——"

"Say, do you know Chow-Sam?" cut in Pete.

This was a question well calculated to divert the attention of an Omaha Chinaman. Chow-Sam owned two large restaurants and a store. He was the local Chinese standard of sagacity and business ability.

"You know Chow-Sam?" asked Song.

"Sure; I sell Chow-Sam his coffee."

"You sell coffee Chow-Sam?"

Pete nodded. "That's right. Chow-Sam he buy all his coffee of me."

"What kind coffee you sell Chow-Sam?"

"I sell him good coffee, sixteen cent."

"Good coffee, sixteen cent?"

"Sure."

"You pay flate?"

"Yes, we pay freight."

"Good coffee, sixteen cent, you pay flate, all same Chow-Sam," thus reducing the proposition to its ultimate terms.

"That's it."

"You send me four hundred pound all same Chow-Sam."



"All right, Song, you git coffee in about two weeks. Good-bye."

"Good-bye"

"Now, I suppose," muttered Pete, as he halted upon the sidewalk to light a cigar, "that the professor would have had me go up an alley and auto-suggest a while before I went in to sell that bill. That psychology business is all tommy-rot. The way to do a thing is just go and do it, and if you find that you're no good at it then tackle something else that you can do. That's my philosophy."

As the passenger train pulled out of Omaha the professor fell into a meditation. "That Mr. Crowther," mused he, "is probably a born salesman. From the standpoint of salesmanship his ideas and instincts are automatically sound. He is like one of those robust fellows who know nothing about the laws of physical culture or nutrition, but who eat heartily and digest without difficulty. But how about that poor fellow who is born an undervitalized anæmic? He must work out a new birth. It is so with the fellow whom Mr. Crowther calls 'no good.'

The idealism of modern psychology has a message of hope for him. He need not be the victim of his temperament."

In the meantime Song had resumed his seat upon the soap-box and continued to pare potatoes for dinner. It would be somewhat hazardous to attempt to trace a meditation through the devious channels of the Oriental mind, but from the placid and painstaking manner in which he was making the potato-parings thin, it would be safe to infer that somewhere within the purlieus of his consciousness there was lurking the Chinese equivalent of "every little bit helps."

## CHAPTER V

### PARTICULARLY PRUNES

**W**ELL, what's on your mind to-day, Pete?" greeted Sam Cartright, of the grocery firm of Cooper & Cartright, as Pete Crowther stepped into the store and shook hands.

"Prunes."

"Prunes?"

"Prunes!"

"What about prunes?"

"I want to sell you some."

"Oh, come, Pete! Why not a barrel of granulated sugar?"

"Because sugar isn't prunes."

"No; but prunes is prunes."

"Not unless they're Amigon prunes."

"Amigon?"

"That's what. We've got hold of the best

line of prunes in the country and are putting them out under our Amigon brand, and that means class. See?"

"Oh, well, you know we buy our line from Bond-Mathews and ——"

"Sure; and I'm not trying to get your general line. This is something special. That's why I'm here."

"You'll have to excuse me to-day. I'm mighty busy; besides, we've got all kinds of prunes — enough to last two months."

"Smith wants to talk to you over the 'phone about those new delivery wagons, Mr. Cart-right," interrupted Jim Sanders, the head clerk.

"Come in some other time, Crowther; I can't spare a minute to-day," and Cartright hurried away.

"What are you trying to put over on Cart-right?" inquired Jim.

"Prunes."

"Prunes?"

"That's what — prunes."

"You've got your nerve, all right."

"Sure; I need it in my business. Have a cigar, Jim?"

"Thanks. I'll smoke it after dinner."

"Say, Jim, I'm going to sell Cartright some prunes, and I want you to get on to my scheme for pushing them," and Pete unfolded to Sanders the salient points of his plan.

"Not a bad idea," admitted Sanders, "but you'll never sell Cartright a bill of prunes to-day."

"How's your prune trade, anyway, Jim?"

"Nothing to brag about; Cartright said yesterday that it isn't what it ought to be. Well, good luck to you, Pete," and he turned to wait upon a customer.

"What, still here?" exclaimed Cartright, half an hour later, as he encountered Pete at the lower end of the store.

"Still here. I know you're busy to-day, but then you always are. I've got a great scheme here, Mr. Cartright, and I want you to know what it is. You'll be interested whether you buy or not."

"You don't mean to say, Crowther, that there's anything new in prunes?"

"Exactly that. In the first place, just take a slant at these prunes," and Pete produced his sample. "Aren't they the goods, though?"

"Specially prepared for samples," grinned Cartright.

"Nit — taken right out of stock."

"A fine prune, all right," admitted Cart-right.

"The best prune ever grown in the Santa Clara Valley," asserted Pete. "And, say, I want to show you something; let me have one of your best imported French prunes — a St. Julien." Pete took out his knife and cut the two prunes open, and then drew a magnifying-glass from his pocket. "Now take a squint through this glass, and notice that this Amigon prune has got the same fine soft fibre as that French prune, and it's got just as rich and nutty a flavour, too. It's this way: The owner of the prune orchard where Amigon prunes are grown is the best prune expert in California. He sent to the Loire Valley in France and imported prune slips, from which his orchard was raised. Amigon prunes are really St. Julien prunes grown

in the Santa Clara Valley. We've got the whole line, and they don't cost you any more than ordinary California prunes."

"Oh, we've got enough good prunes. The problem is to sell them."

"Precisely; and that's where my scheme comes in. The fact is that not one store in a dozen is doing the business in prunes that they ought to. Is your prune trade what it ought to be?"

"It might be better, but then we can't take the time from other things to push prunes."

"What's the matter with letting us push them for you?"

"How?"

Pete produced a card. "You see, Cartright, one reason why prunes are in bad is because there are so many poor prunes on the market. They set the pace. Nobody is trying to brace up the reputation of good prunes. It's time to say a word for them, and here you have it. How's this for a song-and-dance on prunes?" and he handed the card to Cartright, who glanced it over. It read as follows:

## WHY YOU SHOULD EAT PRUNES

- (1) Because they are richest in food value of any fruit.
- (2) Because, when properly prepared, they are the most appetizing and satisfying.
- (3) Because they have a distinct medicinal value. They exert a direct and beneficial action upon the liver.
- (4) Because they are cheapest of all saccharine sub-acid fruits.

## WHY YOU SHOULD EAT Amigon PRUNES

- (1) Because they are specially grown and packed for Dodd, Garrells & Co., at the best prune orchard in the Santa Clara Valley, and put out under the well-known Amigon brand, thus guaranteeing their quality. Amigon stands for quality.
- (2) Because they are equal to the best imported French prunes, and yet sold at the price of common prunes.
- (3) Because Amigon prunes are rich, sweet, plump, and luscious — in a class by themselves.

## HOW TO COOK Amigon PRUNES

Cleanse thoroughly, soak in water ten or twelve hours, adding a little granulated sugar when putting to soak, but not much, as Amigon prunes are rich in natural fruit sugar. After soaking let them "simmer" on back of stove. Do not boil them. Boiling prunes will spoil them. Keep lid on. Shake gently — *do not stir*. When tender, serve cold with prune juice and cream.

"I'll leave it to you," commented Pete, "if that description of Amigon prunes doesn't make



a man want to eat a prune; and, say, that statement about prunes being beneficial to the liver is straight goods. People fall for the health racket nowadays. That one point alone makes that card a centre shot. Another thing that gets prunes in bad, they aren't cooked right. Most cooks make a mush out of them, but when they are cooked according to that card they come up so plump and fresh that a dish of strawberries ain't in it; and you know how women bite when you show them a recipe."

"What of it? We couldn't keep a boy at the door handing out these cards — we have too many other things to do."

"Sure, and that's where we help out again. We are going to put these Amigon prunes, at the start, into only two stores in a town; one of them a regular customer — Price's, in this town — and the other not a regular customer. Of course we want to get you people, but if you don't take them I'll get them into Thomas's; he's working up a cracking good business, and he's out for new schemes. But suppose you put them in; we'll have you and Price each give

us a list of fifty families, and we'll send a boy around and deliver a half-pound package of Amigon prunes at each place. One of these cards is in each package. See? They'll be snapped up good and plenty. People like to get something for nothing. Then we send you with each case twenty-five paper bags with 'Amigon Prunes' printed on the outside. You wrap the prunes up in these bags. We also send a quantity of these cards and you slip a card into the bag. That's all you do extra, and the prunes will do the rest. Then, besides, we send you three or four big cards a foot square, printed the same as these cards, only in larger type, and you put one in your show window and hang one or two up. How's that for a scheme to jack up your prune trade? But that isn't all. We go one better. We send, free of charge, a twenty-five-pound case of prunes wrapped up in half-pound packages with a card in each package, and you hand them out to customers who ought to use prunes, but don't. All this time the prunes will be getting in their work, and, believe me, the Amigon brand will give tone to the deal

— the people in this town are getting wise to the fact that Amigon means class. The scheme is a winner, Cartright.”

“How do you sell them?”

“Nine and a quarter. How’s that for a price?”

“The price is all right. What’s your proposition?”

“They come in twenty-five-pound cases. We want a thirty-case order.”

“What, seven hundred and fifty pounds of prunes? Not on your life!”

“Why not?”

“It would overstock us. We’ve got a good supply on hand now. No, we can’t make a deal to-day. Come in some other time.”

“See here, Cartright, this scheme will work, and I’ll take a chance along with you. I’ll split the shipment. I’ll send fifteen cases now and the other fifteen in sixty days; and say, if the thing doesn’t go, you may countermand the second shipment. We will be taking more chances than you. Look at the advertising we do on it. What do you say?”

Cartright thrust his hands into his pockets and meditated. Pete pulled out his order-book.

"All right, send them along; but see here, Crowther, if those prunes don't move I'll countermand that second shipment as sure as guns."

"Sure; but, you take it from me, they'll move. Much obliged, Cartright. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

During the next few weeks Pete devoted his spare time to a prune propaganda. He handed prune cards to conductors, brakemen, hotel clerks, and proprietors. He gave them to fellow-drummers with the request that they call for Amigon prunes at hotels and eating-houses. He employed small boys at ten cents each to hand cards out along the main streets. He left cards upon hotel desks, writing-tables, and store counters. He sold a bill of Amigon prunes to the two leading grocery stores in nearly every city along his route, and left a trail of prunes and prune cards across the State and back. Within sixty days mail orders commenced to pour in, and, as a result of the campaign, Dodd, Garrells & Co. shipped over 30,000 pounds of Amigon



.. If those prunes don't move I'll countermand that second  
shipment as sure as guns ..



prunes into Pete's territory within three months. The firm closed a contract for nearly the entire output of the prune orchard, and made these prunes a permanent feature of the Amigon brand.

The time was drawing near for the annual banquet which Dodd, Garrells & Co. were accustomed to give to their travelling force. Mr. Dodd and Mr. Garrells were in conference over the programme. "Why not have a toast on 'Prunes' and get Crowther to give it?" suggested Dodd.

"Do you think he'd do it?"

"I'll speak to him about it."

A week later, when Mr. Dodd broached the matter to Pete, he promptly balked. "Why, I never made a speech in my life," he protested.

"You needn't make a speech. Just give them a talk on salesmanship and specialties, and particularly prunes."

"What! me tell men like Fordham and Parsons and those other fellows how to sell goods? Nit. Get Parsons to do it. He's a star salesman, and he can talk."

"See here, Pete, you are getting to be the best specialty man on our force. You are making our Amigon goods jump. Specializing is a very important thing in our business. The men all know what a record you've made on prunes. Several of them have asked me how you do it. I'd like to have you talk about it — not a speech, you understand, but just a plain talk in your own way. I would consider it a favour. Think it over."

The upshot of the matter was that Pete was on the programme for a toast on prunes. Mr. Dodd acted as toastmaster. When introducing Pete, he called attention to the circumstances that had precipitated the prune campaign. "When we loaded up so heavily with those prunes last fall, it looked for a time as if we were badly overstocked. To be sure they were choice prunes and the price was right, but, as you all know, it became necessary to do something unusual to make that stock move. You salesmen all helped out, but I don't mind telling you that nearly all the special features of that selling scheme were originated by Mr. Crowther, and



I might also say that during the past three months we have shipped 32,400 pounds of Amigon prunes into Pete's territory, and so allow me to present to you the prune champion of 1902

When Pete arose to speak, he was greeted with a volley.

"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Parsons, "we have with us to-night ——"

"Pete's here because he's here, because he's ——"

"Oh, cut it out! Give Petey a chance."

"What's the matter with Pete?"

"He's all right."

"Who's all right."

"Pete!!"

This reception was precisely what Pete needed to put him at his ease. "Go to it, gents," he grinned, "but I'll come across with some prunes. You watch out. When the old man — that is, Mr. Dodd — asked me to go on this programme, I said, 'Nix, I'm no orator'; but he said I needn't make a speech. He just wanted me to give a little talk, so that's what this is —

a game of talk. Now about that prune business: I've noticed that one danger in selling goods is that after a man gets a trade worked up he's liable to get into a rut. It's easy to just go around and take an order for what a customer wants, and then beat it to the next one. When a man gets into that habit and stops working new schemes, he begins to let down and loses interest in his job. It's a big thing in salesmanship to have your job look good to you. People like to deal with a man who's stuck on his job. Salesmanship is a corking good job so long as a man's trade keeps growing. There's always more fun while you're getting a thing than there is after you've got it. When a man stops growing — no matter what he's at — his job begins to look punk. I know a couple of fellows that go out over my territory — good salesmen, too — who have stopped going ahead, and every time I meet them now I notice that they've got a grouch on — always kicking about traveling being a dog's life, and all that kind of stuff. Now one of the best ways to beat that is to specialize. A man that keeps specializing is

always digging up something new and interesting about goods and —— ”

“Anything new and interesting in prunes, Pete?” called Parsons.

“That’s what. I’ll pass the prunes around in a minute; but I was going to say another thing about specializing — it’s one of the best ways to work up new trade. In every town there’s one or two good stores that you can’t sell. Somehow you get in bad and can’t make a dent in them. It’s easy to pass those places up, but a man never gets anywhere by quitting. Now the best way to jimmy into places like that is to tackle them every little while on some Amigon specialty. Here’s a case that’s in my mind: a store out on my territory — Cooper & Cartright — the best grocery in town. I don’t know why I never could sell Cartright. He’s a good fellow and always treated me white, but always turned me down. He’s stuck on buying from Bond-Mathews. Well, I used to drop in there about every other trip and give him a holler on some special thing in Amigon goods. It took me four years to break in there. I finally

downed him with those Amigon prunes, and he's been selling stacks of them since; and now he has put in Amigon olives and Amigon baking-powder. I'll get him on the whole Amigon line yet, and that's the beauty of specializing. One reason why the wholesale grocery business is such a bully proposition is because it gives the best kind of a chance to specialize. You can trot out a new specialty every two or three months, and as soon as you dig up the facts about an article it gets mighty interesting. The facts about anything are always interesting. You take a prune. In some ways it is like a yellow dog — everybody takes a kick at it. But one day I went with my wife to an art gallery. I don't know anything about art, but I saw a picture there painted by one of these big artists — I've forgot his name — a picture of a barefooted boy and a yellow dog, and, say, I couldn't take my eyes off that dog. 'Cause why? Because he was the real thing. Now if an artist can make a yellow dog as interesting as that, why can't a salesman do the same thing with a prune? You take it from me, he can if

he'll go to it and get at the facts. I sent out to California and got some photographs of the prune orchard where they grow Amigon prunes, and I found out about the man that grows them, and, say, he's the best prune expert in California, and he imported the real St. Julien prune slips from the Loire Valley in France, and his orchard was grown from those prune slips. The fact is that Amigon prunes are St. Julien prunes raised in the Santa Clara Valley, and they've got these Imperia prunes and Hungarian prunes and Italian prunes skinned to a finish. 'Cause why? Because they're softer and plumper and have a higher percentage of fruit sugar. Believe me, it's as interesting as a detective story. And do you gents realize that Amigon prunes have got a lot of proteid in them and that ——"

"Hold on, Pete — proteid?"

"Sure; proteid is the nourishment stuff in food. If it wasn't for the proteid in it, your food would be nix. That's why prunes fill you up so quick — they're full of nutriment. Then, too, prunes are rich in properties that stimulate

a man's liver. Prunes are the best kind of a liver tonic."

"Sure about that, are you?" called one of the men.

"Sure. I've tried it, and look at me. Prunes are the healthiest kind of a breakfast food. Caruso eats prunes for breakfast every morning, and see what a robust ——"

"How do you know he does?"

"I saw it in the papers. But I don't have to prove it by me and Caruso. I know a doctor that's a food specialist and I was talking to him about prunes. He's the man that put me wise to that proteid thing. I showed him that prune card, and he said that the statement there about the prunes being good for the liver was correct. Another thing the Doc said: he went on to explain how there's some kind of connection — I don't know — between a man's ideas and his insides that's got a whole lot to do with the way they work. He said that if a man believes that prunes are good for him and he eats prunes, why, they will make him feel better, anyway, and so it's a good thing to circulate

those prune cards, no matter how you look at it. The more prunes people eat, the better for them — that's what the Doc said — and so when a man specializes on prunes he's a public benefactor. See?

“Another thing I did: I got a magnifying-glass. It beats the band how everybody likes to look at things under a magnifying-glass. If you cut open an Amigon prune and get a buyer to look at it through a magnifying-glass you'll get him going, because the prune has got a soft, meaty chocolate look that makes a man want to bite right into it; and while he's looking at it, if you give him the right kind of a spiel about the prune orchard and tell him what a rich, sweet, nutty flavour an Amigon prune has ——”

“Did you say nutty?”

“That's the word — nutty; and it's a good word to use when you talk prunes — everybody likes nuts — why, you'll get his goat.

“One thing more: I want to say one or two things about the Amigon brand. The more I think about that brand, the bullier it looks. I've got a friend who's a Christian Scientist,

and the other evening he tried to make me believe that there isn't any such thing as a thing. He claims that there isn't anything to it but what's in a man's mind. Of course that's all tommy-rot, because you can see a thing and feel it, and so of course it's there and it's a thing. If it was all in your mind, you couldn't bump up against it. But, all the same, there's something in his proposition, because ideas have got a whole lot to do with what's in goods. You take a prune. Now of course there are different kinds of prunes. Some are small and hard and sour, and others are plump and soft and sweet; I guess a Christian Scientist would admit that when he's buying some, anyway. But take a good prune, and what is it? Show it to one man, and he will say that it's nix — a second-class boarding-house thing, not fit to eat, and that's what it actually is to him because that's his idea of it. Show the same prune to another man, and he'll tell you that it's a rich, succulent proposition, because his idea is ——"

"What's that succulent?" called Parsons.

"It's a word I saw in a fruit-grower's circular,



and it looked good — sounds kind of juicy — so I copped it. But I was going to say that a good prune is only half of the case. You've not only got to have the right prune, but your man has got to have the right mental slant at it. What a prune really is depends about half on what's in the prune, and the other half on what's in a man's cocoanut. See? Now that's where brands come in. That's why Amigon is such a big thing in our business. We've been yammering away on the Amigon brand until we have got people to see that the word Amigon means something choice and fine. Just standing all alone, Amigon means class. That idea is in people's heads. Now you take a case of good prunes and put the Amigon brand on it and there you've got the prune and the idea hitched up together. That's why Amigon prunes are the best in the world. And right here I want to say that one reason why we are the people is because Dodd, Garrells & Co. are the Amigon house, and you take it from me ——"

The rest of Pete's peroration was lost in a tumult of applause, in the midst of which he

wiped the perspiration from his face and took his seat.

"That was a mighty good talk you gave us, Pete," said Parsons, after the banquet, as he shook Pete's hand in congratulation.

"Thanks. How's everything going, Parsons?"

"Oh, business is fair, but I've been a little off lately — a nasty pain in my back."

Pete bent over and spoke confidentially into Parsons's ear. "It's your liver; eat Amigon prune" was what he said.

## CHAPTER VI

OVER SUNDAY AT THE HOTEL — I. SATURDAY  
NIGHT

**T**HE loaded 'bus backed up into the light that streamed from the hotel lobby. The passengers hurried inside to register. Pete Crowther came in more leisurely, serene in the consciousness that he had wired for a room. The clerk caught sight of him among the arrivals and tapped the bell. "Show Mr. Crowther up to Number 26," said he to the boy.

"Here, son, take my stuff up to the room and bring the key back to the office. I'll go into the wash-room and get a shine."

"All right, Mr. Crowther."

Some one tapped Pete upon the shoulder. He turned and confronted Billy Dawson, a fellow-drummer.

"Hello, Billy! When did you blow in?"

"About an hour ago. Did you get a room?"

"Sure. Number 26, facing the park. How are you fixed?"

"I'm all right — up on the next floor. Come on in to supper, Pete."

"Wait till I wash up and get a shine."

"Over Sunday with us, Mr. Crowther?" greeted the head waiter cordially at the dining-room door.

"That's what. Say, Billy, ain't that Mark Lowden over there by the window?"

"Yes; but let's not go over there."

"Why not?"

"He's too religious — belongs to the Gideons."

"What of it? He's on the level."

"Yes; but he'll talk church. It makes a man uncomfortable."

"Conscience?"

"Maybe; anyhow, I'd hate to be as religious as Mark. It would queer my business."

"It don't seem to queer his. They say he's got a good trade. Hello, Roxy! what would a Saturday night supper be without you to serve it? Bring me a tenderloin steak medium,

fried eggs on one side, hot rolls, lobster salad, Lyonnaise potatoes, corn cakes, and coffee."

"Since when did you go on a diet, Pete?"

"Ever since I was a kid. It's three square meals a day for mine and no Fletcher monkey-work."

Billy's order was more modest. "Bring me some dry toast, a poached egg, a baked potato, and a cup of Oolong tea."

"Why not go the whole length, Billy, and take a glass of malted milk?"

"Oh, that's all right for you healthy yaps to talk, but two years ago I was all in. I couldn't digest a cup of milk. Now I can eat a decent meal and get away with it. It was Fletcher that fixed me up. Just watch me macerate this feed to a liquid."

"Well, I guess there's something in that all right for a fellow who's up against it. But so long as a man's stomach is on the job he'd better not butt in. That's my philosophy."

Returning to the lobby, they settled back for an after-supper smoke.

"Did you ever read 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' Billy?"

"Yes, years ago; but I wasn't stuck on it."

"Why not?"

"Too much prayer-meeting in it. Those old Scotchmen are too sanctimonious. They make me tired."

"Why, that was only incidental. The main point in that story is the Saturday night thing. Here is a man who goes home to his cottage on Saturday night after a week of hard work. One thing that makes Saturday night such a bully proposition is hard work. Take these fellows who don't have to work, and Saturday night looks like any other night to them. It's a great thing to be obliged to hustle all the week. That's what gives tang to Saturday night."

"Yes; but the principal thing about that poem is home — the only place for a white man on Saturday night. One reason why travelling is such a deuce of a job is that it keeps a man away from home so much on Saturday nights."

"Oh, sure; but when I'm six hundred miles away from home and can't help it, then give me

Saturday night in a good hotel where I'm acquainted. A hotel, Billy, is like an individual — to appreciate it you must be on intimate terms. When you know your hotel, and can go right to the comfortable spots, and everybody in the house knows you and gives you the glad hand, why, Saturday night ain't any such lonesome proposition — not on your life."

Strains of orchestra music came floating in from the dining-room. Groups of commercial travellers were scattered about the lobby joking and chaffing. Uniformed bellboys were hurrying back and forth. The long row of rockers was filled with guests who had just finished supper. The air was radiant with good-fellowship.

"Get on to Tom in his new suit of clothes behind the desk," continued Pete. "Does he enjoy being the main push — does Tom? Just watch that lady come out of the elevator and teeter across the lobby. This is the second time this evening. Yes, sister, we are all looking! See that little dude flashing his Saturday night roll in front of Mabel at the cigar-stand. Everybody is up on their toes as if they had

something coming. It's like a country dance just after the fiddlers have tuned up. 'All join hands and circle to the left!' Say, Billy, Saturday night in a good hotel makes a cotter's Saturday night look like thirty cents!"

## II. SUNDAY MORNING

The room was large and airy. The bed was wide and clean and springy. The window afforded a spacious outlook upon the park. The morning sun came glinting into the room through the trees. Pete yawned and stretched and opened his eyes. Eight hours of refreshing sleep, and yet he soon found himself debating the question, Shall I or shall I not get up? It is doubtless true that if one would relax in the absolute sense and properly bid defiance to the encroachments of time and tide, he can do no better than to lie abed Sunday morning. Furthermore, that incipient hobo — the relic of our cave ancestry — that exists in every man, and which impels him at intervals to violate conventionality and fling propriety to the winds, finds a normal and comparatively harmless





"Say, Billy, Saturday night in a good hotel makes a cotter's Saturday night look like thirty cents!"



gratification in lying abed Sunday mornings. Pete did not reason this out, but he felt it.

On the other hand, there was the self-respect involved in a Sunday morning shave and shine and clean linen — a remnant of the Sunday ethics of bygone years when one's mother gave his neck and ears an extra scrub and put on a clean collar for church. Then, too, there were the Sunday papers waiting down at the newsstand.

Pete sat up in bed and glanced at himself in the mirror opposite. Unwashed, unshaven, hair dishevelled — “Gee, a man looks fierce lying abed in the daytime!” he muttered. He was minded to get up. He looked back at the pillow. The lure of the bed was too strong. He lay down again. “It’s bed for mine,” he sighed contentedly. But there was breakfast waiting down below: oatmeal and Jersey cream, farm sausages, hot muffins and honey, wheat cakes, and Java coffee! Pete sat up and glanced uncertainly toward his clothes, but once more the bed lured him. He lay down again. Presently a faint pang of hunger stirred him. “I’ll

be hungry good and plenty before noon," he thought. "Oh, what's the use? It's me for up!" and with a supreme effort of will he kicked off the covering and sprang out of bed. An hour later found him in the lobby sitting with feet upon the brass railing gazing through the plate glass window up the quiet avenue. He was freshly shaved and brushed. In his mouth was a fifteen-cent cigar, in his hand two Sunday newspapers, and in his heart the peace and quietude of a Sabbath morn.

"How's tricks, Pete?" saluted Mark Lowden as he dropped into the chair beside him.

"Fine. Business is good, and so is my health. How is it with you?"

"Never better. What have you got on for this forenoon?"

"These two Sunday papers. They ought to last till noon if I take a little walk in between."

"Oh, those papers will keep until afternoon. Come on to church with me."

"Why should I go to church?"

"Why shouldn't you go?"

"Because I don't want to. Ain't that a good reason?"

"No. That may be a fact, but it isn't a reason."

"Well, give me one good reason why I should go."

"To help the church and to help you."

"It don't help me any to go to church. These preachers haven't got red blood in them. The things they talk about don't interest me. What do I care about hell-fire or Moses and the Children of Israel? Preachers live back in the first century. I'm living in the twentieth century myself. What I'm interested in is business and baseball and the high cost of living. Honestly, I get more good out of a newspaper than I do going to church."

"You're 'way off, Pete. Say, I'll bet that you haven't been to church in six months."

"You lose. I went with my wife last December — only five months ago."

"Yes. The fact is you don't go often enough to get a line on what the preachers are talking about. You don't hear much hell-fire from the

pulpit nowadays, but you do hear more or less about hell — although they may not call it that. There's plenty of hell right near this hotel; in fact, there is some of it in every one of us. Evil is hell. As for Moses and the Children of Israel, I'd like to know where our moral code would be if it hadn't been for them. Whatever honour or truth you find in business or politics comes from our moral standards, and we got most of them from the Ten Commandments. You haven't got any case, old man; you are pettifogging. Come on to church."

"Nit. That sermon you just preached is all I need to-day. You stay here with me. Come up to my room and have a good cigar and I'll let you look at these pictures of the 'Katzenjammer kids' and 'Henpecko the Monk.'"

"No, I'm going to church. I'll see you later."

### III. SUNDAY EVENING

The hotel lobby was nearly deserted. Pete listlessly tossed away a half-smoked cigar as Mark Lowden halted before him and asked how the day had used him.

"Oh, so so," yawned Pete.

"Isn't it queer how Saturday night holds it over Sunday night?" said Mark. "And yet it ought to be just the other way."

Pete shook his head. "Nix; how do you figure that out?"

"Why, Sunday ought to refresh a man and brace him up. The trouble is right here: In the first place, the average man eats more than he needs on Sunday."

"Twice as much," admitted Pete.

"And then he smokes more than usual," continued Mark.

"Three times as much."

"Then he spends the best part of the day saturating his mind with a double dose of politics, athletics, and crime out of the Sunday papers, and sits around the house or hotel most of the day, and, as a result, when evening comes he feels ——"

"Rotten!" volunteered Pete.

Mark smiled. "You put it stronger than I intended. I was going to say he feels restless and discontented."

"But it's that way with everything," protested Pete. "There's always more fun before than after. That's true of a ball game or a show or a summer vacation, as well as Sunday — it's human nature."

"Not necessarily. If on Sunday a man would brace his body up with fresh air and moderate, wholesome food, and would occupy his mind with better thoughts and higher ideals by coming into contact with people of moral earnestness, and ——"

"Go to church three or four times and stay there most of the day," interrupted Pete in disgust.

Mark laughed good-naturedly.

"No; we will just say go to church once and to Bible school once and ——"

"Not on your life! That kind of a Sunday would certainly get my goat. You like that sort of thing, Mark, but I don't — nothing in it for me."

"Say, Pete, here's a proposition. I'll go to church with you this evening, to any place you select, and if you don't admit afterward



that it did you good I'll set up a fifty-cent cigar."

"I'll go you!" cried Pete, springing to his feet. "There's everything to win and nothing to lose. Come on."

The following afternoon Pete met Billy Dawson on the train. "Where were you last evening?" asked Billy. "I didn't see you around the hotel."

"No; Mark Lowden stumped me to go to church. He said he would go to any place I might pick out, and if I didn't agree afterward that it did me good, he would put up a fifty-cent cigar, so I called him on it and we started out. You know that big church at the corner below the hotel; well, we stepped into the vestibule and looked inside. There was a small bunch of stylish-looking people and lots of empty seats — a frosty proposition. I told Mark that he wouldn't get a run for his money in there, so we went on down the street to the next church. That one was pretty well filled. A lot of young fellows were ushering, and back of the pulpit in the choir loft some fellows were

tuning up their violins and 'cellos and getting out their cornets — they had a regular orchestra, and about one hundred young people in the choir. You could see that there was going to be something doing. A choir-leader come out and started some lively songs, and pretty soon he got everybody to going. Things began to get so warm that I expected he was going to call for 'Alexander's Rag-Time Band,' but he switched over on to old hymns that everybody knew, and by that time I got into the push myself. Then, the leader sang a solo, and he was a crackajack singer, too. You take some of these church singers, and the only difference between them and Mary Garden is that they've got more clothes on and can't sing so well, but they sing to show off and you can't understand a word they say. This fellow was different. He wanted you to hear the words as well as the music. The song was called 'Why Not You?' It was about people who had done hard things and got their bumps trying to help others, and every verse ended up with the question, 'Why not you?' Before he got through he had that



"By that time I got into the push myself."



question up against the crowd all right, and the music rubbed it in.

"The preacher was one of those cadaverous-looking guys, and when he first came in I didn't take much stock in him, but as soon as he started the sermon you could see that he had the goods. The trouble with some preachers is they don't go to it. Why, if you and I should talk our line of goods the way they talk theirs we wouldn't sell a bill in a thousand years; but this man got right at you."

"What did he preach about?" asked Billy.

"He called it 'The Cost of Character.' He claimed, first, that character was the whole thing. He went on to show that nobody but a man of character can stand up in front of himself. The way he described how a man keeps hauling himself up on the mat when he's alone, and what it means to lose your self-respect — well, it was warm stuff. Of course, when a preacher comes across with that proposition the way he did there ain't anything else to it. Then he showed that the only thing we really respect in other men is character, and he made

it so plain that you couldn't get past it. Before he got through with that character business he had me feeling about the size of a peanut, and I looked around at the crowd and saw he was getting their goat too. The fact is, Billy, a preacher has got something on every congregation he talks to, and if he knows how to put it over so they will just naturally see it, why, it's all off — they've got to sit and take it without any kick coming. He had something on me all right."

"I don't like that kind of preaching," said Billy. "I like to feel comfortable when I go to church."

"Yes; but when you deserve a biff on the jaw, you've got to respect the man that hands it to you. But that wasn't all of his sermon — in fact, he had only just begun. He went on then to point out what it costs to be a man of character. He talked about poverty and saloons and child labor and fifty-seven other varieties of deviltry that must be fought and cleaned up by somebody, and he took the ground that men of character simply must get into the push,

because that's what character means — to put yourself at the service of others. He was dead right about that, too. It's like this, Billy: Take a couple of fellows like you and me; we work hard and sell goods and take care of our families and keep our bills paid, and on election day we go and vote what we think is the best ticket, but what are we doing for society outside of our families? Are we trying very hard to make the world any better? Not on your life! Well, he ended the sermon with a regular volley of cases of men like Paul and Luther and Abraham Lincoln — men who had put their lives in for the common good — and when he got through nobody felt like moving. When we got on the sidewalk Mark said, 'Well there was red blood in that sermon,' and I had to admit that it was a corker."

"Did you take the cigar?" asked Billy.

"Nit!"

## CHAPTER VII

### CRACKERS, COMPETITION, AND AUTOMOBILES

**Y**OU see, Pete, I've been selling crackers in that territory for eighteen years," said Thompson, "and all those merchants were friends of mine. I was acquainted with their families. Why, I knew every dog that barked along that line. I had that trade solid, and then along came that infernal trust cutting and slashing prices; it was fierce. The company finally saw that it was sell out to the trust or go to the wall, so they sold out. The old plant is closed down now, and here I am out of a job. It's an outrage the way these trusts are gobbling up everything; it's enough to make a Socialist of a man."

"It is pretty tough," admitted Pete; "but then you can get another good job if ——"

"Oh, sure, if I wanted to work for a trust



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and begin all over again. But what kind of a layout is that? A travelling man's capital is his acquaintance and customers, and that trust has wiped out all the capital that it took me eighteen years to accumulate. They had the gall to offer me a new territory and \$500 a year less salary. I said nit. I wouldn't work for that bunch, anyhow, after the way they run us out of business. You take it from me, Pete, these trusts are going to put salesmen down and out. Just as soon as they get competition knocked out they won't need anything but clerks."

"Don't you fret. They'll never knock out competition. You see, Thompson, competition isn't a mere matter of prices. The main thing in competition is ideas, personality, something new and different, a better article, better service, and all that. Every successful business is built up around some person who had new ideas. That's the essence of competition. Of course prices cut a big figure, but even on that basis the trusts couldn't knock out competition. The only reason why they've had the advantage

so far is because they haven't played the game fair — they've been hitting below the belt. They have had illegal rebates and high tariffs, and have been going into territories and selling goods at less than cost to wreck somebody and then making it up by raising prices somewhere else. They've got to stop that monkey-work. The people won't stand for it. They have quit that rebate business already, and it won't be long before they stop that bulling and wrecking. Just see how the Interstate Commerce Commission has got the railways to feeding out of its hand. We'll find some way to make the trusts lie down and roll over too. They've got to play fair, and then they can't put the smaller concerns out — not on the merits. Did you read the argument that Mr. Brandeis, that Boston lawyer, made before the committee at Washington, where he showed that when a trust gets about so big it grows topheavy and can't do business any better than a smaller concern? He proved it, too."

"Oh, well, Pete, a big concern can buy to better advantage than a small one, and —— "

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"Nit — not if the small buyer is on to his job. Any travelling man will admit that a good buyer can get bottom prices even on a small deal."

"All the same, the big companies are going to get you grocery men. See how the department stores and mail-order houses are walking over you."

"Not on your life! My company has been growing faster than ever, and so have our customers. Those mail-order concerns have picked up a good trade, but business has been growing a mighty sight faster than they have. We are living in a highly civilized age, Thompson, and civilization, you understand, simply means wanting more stuff. Then, besides, we get right at the people. It's personal contact that counts. Nit — they'll never knock out the salesmen."

"Well, anyhow, it looks to me as if selling goods is on the blink just now."

"That's where you're 'way off, Thompson. The chances are bigger than ever. I was talking yesterday with the sales manager of a big manufacturing company, and he said there was more

demand than ever for first-class salesmen and more money in it. He told me what their salesmen were doing, and it was a corking good showing. You see, new inventions keep springing up and new lines of business. Take this automobile business. Why, they sold over \$400,000,000 worth of automobiles in the United States last year. It took a lot of salesmen to do that. Do you remember George Gray that used to travel for us? He quit and went to an Eastern city two years ago and began to sell automobiles. I met his brother Charlie last week, and he said that George cleaned up over \$9,000 on his first year's sales. That's going some, eh? I heard a couple of travelling men talking on the train yesterday, and one of them said that he made \$2,000 extra commissions last year selling automobile supplies. Then you take all this modern electrical machinery and these industrial stocks and securities, and business insurance, and typewriting machines, and printograph machines — why, it will be aeroplanes next! Say, if I didn't have a mighty good trade and a first-class house I'd quit the

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grocery business cold and jump into one of these big specialties. Believe me, old man, a specialty salesman never had so good a chance."

"Possibly so; but it's a pretty raw deal to begin all over again in a new line. You see, Pete, I had just got things about where I wanted them. I owned some stock in the company, and in a few years I was going to quit the road and —— "

"Yes, and move up on Easy Street; but, you take it from me, as soon as a man strikes Easy Street he begins to go to seed. Do you remember Joe McDonald that used to travel up Northwest selling drygoods? He was a bully good salesman, and always full of schemes and ginger. The last time I met him on the road, about four years ago, he showed me a telegram from Seattle. You know Seattle was one of Mac's towns, and he got to dabbling in real estate out there when the boom was on. Well, some parties telegraphed him an offer of \$85,000 for a piece of property that cost him \$15,000. He cleaned up about \$185,000 altogether on Seattle real estate, so he quit the road and

moved up on Easy Street. I met him again about a month ago, and I hardly knew him. He had a paunch on, and a grouch too, that he didn't use to have. He wasn't the same fellow at all. He didn't seem interested in things the way he used to be. He told us he had half a mind to go back on the road; but he won't. Easy Street spoils a man for hard knocks. It's like this, Thompson: a man's interest in life depends on hustling and making things move, and that's where salesmanship has got Easy Street skinned to a finish."

"Maybe so, Pete; but, all the same, you intend to move up on that street yourself some day."

"Why, sure, everybody does, but that don't prove that it's a good thing. The fact is that the man who's obliged to hustle is the lucky gink, and that's where you are fortunate. You are being pushed right out into some big selling proposition. Here you are in good health, with lots of selling experience, and you've got a knack of making friends, and you know all the wrinkles of salesmanship. I don't see why you should

be down on your luck. I almost wish that something of that kind would happen to me."

"That sounds good, Pete, but I'm getting along in years. I was fifty my last birthday, and I can't hustle the way —— "

"What of it? One thing a salesman learns when he gets into middle life is how to save his energy. One of the best salesmen we've got is over sixty years old. He goes gum-shoeing around and you'd wonder how he gets the orders, but when the proper time comes to put in the licks you bet old Fordham is right there. These young fellows just starting on the road keep their coat-tails cracking around the corner and waste lots of energy. They're like a baseball pitcher just in from the bushes; he pitches his head off every ball he throws. But old Mathewson doesn't do that. He saves himself and lets the fielders earn their salary. But when men are on bases and nobody out, then watch Matty put on the smoke. That's the way a salesman should put 'em over when he gets to be fifty."

"Yes, but old age is old age; you can't get by that."

"Sure. But what is old age, anyhow? Do you remember how Doc Osler proposed to settle that?"

"Wasn't he the guy that the newspapers talked about?"

"Yes. He was one of the big guns among the doctors at St. Louis or Baltimore, and he introduced a bill — I don't know — to chloroform men when they get to be sixty years old, because he claimed that when a man is sixty he's all in — no good."

"Talking through his hat, wasn't he?"

"Sure. Just trying to start something — and he started it all right. The way these Pro-bono-publicos got after the Doc in the newspapers and magazines was something fierce. Of course what he said was hot air, because he was sixty himself about that time, and he hasn't taken any chloroform yet — not that anybody knows of. And when he was sixty-two he was elected to the head of the medical department in a big English university. And now he's the big medical noise over in England. And, you take it from me, when Osler is eighty years old



he'll be on the job. Do you know Doc Henson?"

"No. Who is he?"

"Why, he was one of the big Baptist preachers in Chicago and Boston. Well, when he was about sixty-eight years old he was called to Tremont Temple, one of the largest churches in the country. I was in Boston one Sunday, and heard him preach. He was seventy-one years old then, and he pranced around that platform like a bay colt, and preached a cracka-jack sermon, too. He has retired from the active ministry now, and, a while ago, on his eightieth birthday, a newspaper sent a reporter out to interview him. And Doc Henson told the reporter that he was just starting to write a new book. The reporter asked him how it seemed to be so old. And Doc Henson said, 'Why, I'm not old, sir. I never intend to grow old. I'll die first.' Now that's the way to talk it. You can't draw a dead line on a man when he puts up such a front as that. They say he does physical culture stunts every day, too. If ever I go up where he lives I'm going to run in and shake hands with the old geezer. When

a man is as full of pep as he is at eighty, why, you've got to take off your hat to him. The fact is, Thompson, a man isn't old until he admits it. His best working years ought to be from fifty to seventy-five. When I'm eighty-five, I propose to be the cockiest gent on the boardwalk — you watch my smoke."

"Here's hoping that you will, Pete," laughed Thompson.

"The trouble is that you've got the wrong slant at things," continued Pete. "The best part of the game is in front of you. You haven't begun to do your best work yet. It all depends on what a man thinks he can do. I met a college professor on the train last year and he started me to thinking about that. These college professors come across with the ideas. This fellow gave me a big song and dance about psychology and salesmanship, and I didn't take much stock in it until I got to thinking about it afterward. He kept quoting a Professor James, and a few months later I was in the public library with my wife and saw a book by Professor James, so I took it out to see if I could

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get on to his curves, and, believe me, it was great stuff. One point he made was this: He claimed that every man has got it in him to do something a mighty sight bigger than he's ever done yet, but the trouble is he limits himself in his own mind — sort of locks himself up in his own think-tank, see, and never goes any farther. One reason why men get drunk is because alcohol kind of unlocks a man's think-tank and turns him loose and makes him see himself big. One man will think he's a captain of industry, and another one will think he's an orator or a singer, and, by George, that's probably what they really are, but of course alcohol paralyzes a man's action and blows off his energy like steam in the air, and never gets him anywhere, and when he sobers up he finds himself back in the same old think-tank with his energy all gone and worse off than before. But just suppose, Thompson, that without the alcohol a man could see himself big like that and have all his faculties in good working order, why, believe me, there'd be something doing; and that's just exactly what he can do by getting

the right ideas into his cocoanut. You need to get a new slant at yourself, old man. You are cut out for some big selling game. Why don't you tackle automobiles? It wouldn't be six months before crackers would look like thirty cents."

"Do you remember that man Thompson I was telling you about two or three months ago?" Pete asked his wife one evening.

"The one that lost his position through the trusts?"

"Yes. I met him this afternoon. He opened up an automobile garage here last month, and he seems to be right up and coming. He had a new suit of clothes on and is full of business. He said that he sold two machines last week."

"Perhaps your talk helped to encourage him, Pete. You are always so hopeful."

"Maybe; anyhow, it's good to see Thompson bucking up after being down on his uppers so. He said he was coming around to give us an automobile ride to-morrow afternoon. Can you arrange it?"

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"Yes, and we'll take Billy along. Since the Spencers got their auto Billy has been crazy to ride in one."

"Thompson sold Spencer that machine. I guess it's a good one."

The following afternoon when Thompson treated the Crowthers to an auto ride he improved the occasion by showing Pete how to operate the machine. "It beats the band," said he, "how easy it is to run one of these things. Just try it."

Pete accepted the invitation, and soon got his first inoculation with the lust for speed.

"He takes hold lil' a professional chauffeur," said Thompson to Mrs. Crowther. "Pete would make a good driver, because he's got the nerve."

"Thanks, Thompson; have a cigar. It's worth that to get a boost in front of my wife."

Pete turned on more power.

"Gee, dad, you know how to make 'er zip, don't you?" said Billy, admiringly.

"Going some, eh, boy?" grinned Pete.

Mrs. Crowther laid her hand nervously upon

Pete's shoulder. "Please don't go so fast, Pete, dear. I'm sure it must be dangerous to go as fast as this."

Pete slowed down. "Wait till you and dad go out together, boy, and we'll hit'er up."

"You bet! We don't get scared up the way mother does, do we, dad?"

When Thompson landed the family at their door, he invited Pete to come down to the garage some evening and examine the interior of the machine. "Automobiles are getting so common now that everybody ought to understand one, and it's an interesting proposition," said he.

That very evening Pete went down and spent over an hour with Thompson inspecting the mechanism, attachments, and latest improvements in automobiles. "It's a mighty expensive game, though," said he. "It looks to me like a rich man's sport."

"Oh, not when you come to think of all that a man pays for other amusements and luxuries that he can just as well cut out if he gets a machine; and, see here, Pete, look at the towns

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that you make within a hundred and fifty miles from here. You can't work more than three a day by train, but if you had a machine you could work half a dozen and get home every night. A travelling man could actually save money by it."

During his next trip, which lasted thirty days, Pete investigated the expenses incident to automobile ownership. "Thompson claims," said he to his wife the first evening after he arrived home, "that a travelling man can save money by owning a machine, but it's a pipe dream. When you come to figure the cost of tires, and garages, and all the toggery you have to buy, and all the extra meals and the depreciation in value of the machine, you don't get by for less than ten or twelve cents a mile. If a man thinks he can economize by owning a machine, he'd better forget it. You know, Jen, I've intended to buy a farm this year. I can get that Green farm for \$4,500, and it's just about what I want, but if I should buy a machine now —— "

"Isn't it strange, Pete," interrupted his wife,

"I've been thinking about a machine myself since you went away."

"Well, I'm not exactly thinking of buying one, you understand. It would cost at least \$2,000, and that's all I've got in the bank just now. I'd have to put off buying that farm until next year if I should buy a machine."

"Why do you want a farm, Pete? I'm sure you'd never be a farmer."

"I don't intend to be. I'd keep a man on it. But one reason why I want a farm is this: When I was a boy and worked in the store, there was a man named Roberts who lived in the city and owned a farm out beyond our village. He used to drive through the village out to his farm three or four times a week. He would stop at the store and buy a cigar and sit and chat with the farmers about crops, and everybody considered him a plutocrat; and ever since then my idea of being well fixed is to live in town and own a farm and drive out to it. That's the kind of a plute I want to be. Another thing: I want to go out to my farm and walk around with the hired man and look at the



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pigs and cows — *my* pigs and cows, you understand — and I want to go out into the field and look around and say to myself, 'This land belongs to Pete, and don't you forget it.' What does a man want to own property for, anyway, Jen? Why does John D. want all that oil stock? He can't eat it. I'll tell you why he wants it: it makes him feel good, that's why; and a farm would make me feel just as good, and then I'd like to know where John D. would have it over me — see?"

"Well, you shall have your farm, dear, but if you had it now you would need an auto to go out and in. Why not get the machine first? Another thing I've been thinking about: You don't get enough recreation. You are too intense. You ought to relax more. An automobile might be the best possible thing to divert your mind from business. Then, too, it would give us such a nice chance to take recreation together. Mrs. Spencer says that they never had such lovely family outings as they've had since they got their machine; and just think how Billy would enjoy it."

"Yes; and that's one reason why we shouldn't get it. Why, when I was Billy's age, I had work to do. I used to get up early and build fires, and take care of a horse and cow, and hoe in the garden, and every summer my father would buy eight or ten cords of hard wood that my brother and I had to saw and split for winter. Boys had to work in those days! But look at Billy! he hasn't got a lick to do and you have to pull him out of bed for breakfast. We are bringing that kid up too soft, and now we propose to dawdle him around in an automobile; gee, it's fierce!"

"Well, Pete, dear, Billy doesn't do chores because there aren't any to do. Perhaps if you had a machine he could take care of that and —— "

"Yes, he'd take care of it by taking joy rides. I'm on to Billy's curves."

"Don't be too hard on Billy, Pete. Just see what good work he's doing in school this term. Have you noticed his report cards?"

"Yes, he's getting on pretty well in school, but —— "

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"And he does an hour's work every day in the manual training class. See what he made and brought home for me last week." And Mrs. Crowther produced a neatly made cutlery box. "Isn't that nice work for a boy of his age? And then he plays baseball on the school team, and plays in the banjo club. He puts in an hour of practice every day just as faithfully."

"Yes, I guess so," grinned Pete. "Graves says that you can't hear anything in the neighbourhood any more but tink-ety-tunk. Billy seems to be getting there on the banjo, all right."

"You see, Pete, Billy is probably just as active as you were when you were a boy, only his activities are different because we are living differently from the way our parents did. How many suits of clothes a year did your father buy?"

"A year! He bought one suit in about three years. He wore overalls most of the time."

"And how many cigars a day did he smoke?"

"Cigars? Nit! He smoked a clay pipe and used Adams Standard tobacco that cost six cents for a quarter of a pound, and that would

last a week. I see your point, Jen. I buy four or five suits a year and I spend fifty cents a day for cigars all right, but —— ”

“Well, I’m not complaining, Pete. But if you aren’t willing to live the way your father did, why do you wish Billy to live the way you did?”

“I don’t; but all the same we are making Billy too high-toned. Somehow we keep letting out more slack on expenses all the time, and —— ”

“Do you think I’m extravagant, Pete?” and Mrs. Crowther’s lip trembled slightly.

“Nix! You’ve always played the game fair, Jen. When I got only a hundred a month didn’t you roll up your sleeves and do all your own work, and when Billy was a baby didn’t you take care of him day and night? One reason why he is such a healthy kid is because you kept his little machine working like a clock, and we never blowed ourselves on expenses any faster than we could afford to. Nit! If any one says that you’re extravagant, girly, I’m ready to fight.”

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"Then what is it you want, Pete, dear?" asked his wife in perplexity.

"Well, when you come right down to it, Jen, I want that cussed machine myself — that's what!"

"Why not buy a nice runabout, then?" suggested his wife. "I'm sure we would enjoy that just as much as we would a more expensive one."

"Nit! If I buy a machine, it's going to be a good one. Do you suppose I'm going to take Spencer's gasoline smoke? Not on your life!"

That afternoon, as Pete was going down the street, he met Thompson driving the new car. "Jump in, Pete," invited Thompson; "I'm only going up to the other end of town and right back." On the way Thompson called attention to the manner in which the car responded to the slightest touch. "She's a beauty, Pete, and don't you forget it."

"How does it compare with Spencer's?"

"Well, that machine of Spencer's is a mighty nice one; but, between you and me, this is quite the finest car I've had in the garage. It's just

about the last word in automobiles, and that's a fact." As they approached the garage Thompson slowed down. "See here, old man, I've got a special reason for wanting to do you a favour. This machine is worth two thousand dollars if it's worth a cent. Give me your check for nineteen hundred."

Pete took out his book and wrote out the check and handed it to him. "It's my piece of junk," said he.

"Will you put it back into the garage?" asked Thompson.

"Not just yet. I'll run up to the house first and make my wife a present." Pete started up the street, but suddenly he put on the brake and stopped. "Oh, I say, Thompson!" he called.

Thompson came hurrying out of the doorway. "What's the matter? Anything wrong with the machine?"

"No, the machine is all right. But say, Thompson, how's crackers beside of automobiles?"

"Don't mention it," laughed Thompson. "Crackers are nix."

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHY PETE LICKED HIS BOY

**T**HE mere fact that a boy grew unruly and impudent toward his mother, and that his father spanked him, would seem hardly worth mentioning, but the truth is that the serious problems of life often confront us in just such a commonplace guise.

When Pete Crowther, with grip and sample-case in hand, stepped off the train and started up the street toward home, life seemed good. He had just finished a strenuous and successful seven weeks' trip. It was a June evening. Pete owned the house in which he lived. He knew that his wife and boy were watching for him and that supper would be awaiting him. "Home," said a Roman law writer, "is the place from which, when a man departs, he becomes

a wanderer, and to which, when he returns, he ceases to wander."

When Pete came within sight of his house, he heard a whoop and his boy Billy came rushing down the walk to meet him.

"Hello, boy!" cried Pete, joyously. "You're glad to see daddy, ain't you?"

"Say, dad," shouted Billy, "we're going to have hot biscuits and honey for supper!"

"Good!" laughed Pete. "I guess that we can get away with a dozen, can't we?"

"You bet!" cried Billy, as he sprang into his father's arms and gave him a hug.

Mrs. Crowther smiled fondly at the pair as they neared the porch. "Well, Jen, how's tricks?" called Pete.

"Oh, we are well, and you are just in time for supper. How's my big boy?" and, giving Pete a kiss, she led the way into the house.

Just why the dead fly must appear when the ointment is most fragrant raises the question of the utility of flies in general, which, of course, is a part of the still larger problem of evil. It would seem as if a joyous homecoming like this



should, for one evening at least, be left undisturbed by the perplexities of domestic problems; but before supper was over Pete observed a certain constraint in the mutual attitude of Billy and his mother. He also perceived that his wife's cheerfulness was largely forced. After Billy had gone to bed he broached the subject.

"What's the matter, Jen? Something troubling you?"

"Yes; I am worried about Billy. He has been getting into so many fights lately. Yesterday he had a fight with Benton's boy, and Mrs. Benton came over and told me that Billy was getting to be the worst boy in the neighbourhood."

"Billy must have whaled him," commented Pete.

"I don't know about that, but really, Pete, Billy gets into a fight nearly every day. I have talked and talked with him about it, but it doesn't seem to do any good."

"Don't fret about it, Jen. Boys will fight, but I guess I can tone it down some."

"That isn't all, Pete. This morning Billy

threw a stone through that big dining-room window of Graves' house. Mr. Graves said that we must pay for it, and I suppose we must. He said that Billy was a terror to the whole street."

"How did Billy come to do it?" asked Pete.

"He said that he was throwing at a cat. I don't know what to do about him. He is getting so strong that I can't manage him any more. He simply must be made to obey. I can't bear it to have people saying such hard things about our boy," and Mrs. Crowther burst into tears.

"Oh, come, Jen. It isn't so bad as all that," soothed Pete. "You must expect a full-blooded boy to get into a scrape now and then. You can't bring him up under a glass case. I will take the matter in hand to-morrow. It will come out all right."

"Do you think that you'll have to whip him?" inquired Mrs. Crowther, anxiously.

"I don't know. When I licked him last, I hoped that I wouldn't have to do it again. When I was a boy, I got licked too much. That

was the old-fashioned way. I always intended to find a better way to handle my kids. Maybe I haven't been chummy enough with Billy. I guess I'll take him to the ball game to-morrow, and that'll give me a chance to get next to him and have a talk."

Billy was delighted the following afternoon when his father proposed the ball game. They went early to watch the teams warm up. Pete bought peanuts and pop, and they rooted in unison for the home team. After the game Billy was still hungry. They stopped at a refreshment stand and had some "hot dog" sandwiches. "Gee, I like to go to places with you, dad; you buy me so much good stuff!" said Billy, admiringly.

On the way home the talk grew confidential. Pete told how they played ball when he was a boy, and Billy talked about the ball team up at their school. The conversation then veered around to the matter of wrestling and fighting.

"How did you come to get into a fight with the Benton boy yesterday?" asked Pete.

Billy grinned sheepishly. "We was rassling

over in the park and I threw him down and he got mad and hit me, and then we had a fight."

"Who licked?"

"I bloodied his nose, and he bellered and run home."

"Looks like you got his goat," said Pete, complacently.

"Then Mrs. Benton come over to our house and told mother I was the baddest boy in the neighbourhood."

"What did your mother say?"

"She stood up for me when she was talking with Mrs. Benton, but when she come in where I was she stood up for Mrs. Benton. Mother says I mustn't fight. Say, dad, did you use to fight when you was a boy?"

"Did I? You bet there wasn't a fellow of my size that could put it on — that is, of course, I used to fight sometimes. Every boy does, you understand."

"But mother says I mustn't fight at all."

"Well, you see, Billy, your mother never had to fight — girls don't have to; but she is right about it this way — it ain't necessary to fight

too often. You don't want to get on your muscle too much. Of course you don't want to back down, or the boys will think you're afraid. Just stand up for yourself and don't crawfish, and don't take too much back talk. You see how it is, Billy?"

"Yes."

"Then don't get into fights over in the park where your mother will see it. It worries her."

"Jimmy Corcoran says he is going to lick me when he catches me down on his street. I told him I could lick him with one hand tied behind me," boasted Billy.

"How big is he?"

"Just about my size. He's licked every boy in school his size except me. I bet he can't lick me."

"Well, don't let him get the jump on you. It's a good thing to land the first punch — that is, if you have to fight him."

Having thus cleared up the ethics of fighting, Pete turned to the episode of the broken window.

"That big tomcat of Graves's was walking along on top of the fence," explained Billy.

"Gee, it was a good mark! You know, dad, when you was home the last time you said you wished some one would crack that cat's cocoa-nut. I don't see how I come to miss him. The stone went right through the window."

"Too bad you didn't hit him; but look out for windows next time. That window cost me eight dollars."

"I'll wait till I catch him on the ground, and I bet I'll hit him in the bean."

They had now come within sight of home.

"I want you to promise me," added Pete, "that you won't do anything to worry your mother."

Billy promised.

After the family had retired that night Pete told his wife about the pleasant and confidential afternoon. "We talked it all over, and he promised me that he wouldn't worry you any more. That's the way to handle a kid, Jen. Let a man be a chum with his boy and he won't have to lick him."

Next afternoon as Pete was coming across the park he noticed a commotion up near his

house. A number of boys were watching Billy and his mother while she was trying to get him to come in. Suddenly he rushed up to her and struck her. She seized him by the jacket and drew him, struggling, into the house.

"So, he's beginning to fight his mother, is he?" muttered Pete grimly as he quickened his pace.

Mrs. Crowther met him at the door. "Pete, that boy of yours is ——"

"I saw the whole business, Jen," interrupted Pete. "Billy has got something coming, and he's going to get it, good and plenty."

Mrs. Crowther took alarm. "You won't hurt him, will you, Pete, dear? He really didn't strike me very hard."

"Won't hurt him! How are you going to punish a boy if you don't hurt him? He'll know that there's been something doing all right."

"Be sure and don't injure his spine, won't you, Pete?"

"Great Scott! Ain't he my flesh and blood as well as yours? But I'll put it on where it'll do the most good, all the same."

Just then Billy entered the room.

"Billy, what's this I saw — striking your mother, sir?"

"Well, why does mother boss me around in front of the boys? She —— "

"Never mind, sir; I'll teach you better than to strike a woman, especially your mother. Go into that bedrocm. I'll be in there in a minute."

Billy whimpered and glanced appealingly at his mother as he entered the bedroom. She laid her hand nervously upon Pete's shoulder. "Don't you think, Pete, that you could —— "

"No, I don't! This chum business is all off when a boy begins to strike his mother. Nothing goes but a licking."

When he entered the bedroom, his wife hurried into the dining-room and closed the door. Presently she opened it slightly and listened. Pete was laying it on vigorously while Billy was filling the room with his outeries. A few moments later Pete emerged wiping the perspiration from his face.

"Are you sure that you didn't injure his spine?" inquired his wife, anxiously.



"There it goes again about that spine!"

"But you are so big and strong, Pete, and he is only a little fellow."

"That's it, now. Make a man feel like a bully! I believe I'm the worst henpecked man in this town. Everything around here has got to be done just your way or it's all off. I'm going out and take a walk."

Billy had suspended his howls long enough to ascertain that a warm discussion was going on in the next room, whereupon he promptly redoubled them in volume. Mrs. Crowther glanced reproachfully at Pete and hurried into the kitchen to hide her tears.

Before going out Pete stepped to the kitchen door. "Now, Jen, don't you go and honey around Billy and make him think he's been abused. I could discipline that boy all right if only you wouldn't butt in so much."

When he returned to the house, matters had calmed down, but his wife was sorrowful and his boy sulky.

The following morning, when Pete started away on a two weeks' trip, Billy was still

unreconciled, and he left for school without kissing his father good-bye. When Pete took his seat in the train, he was oppressed by a consciousness of defeat. He had no doubt that Billy had needed punishment, but it seemed as if there was something wrong about it — he did not know just what. He felt a sense of relief when he saw his fellow-townsmen, Judge Graham, looking for a seat. "Sit here with me, Judge; plenty of room." Pete soon turned the conversation toward the subject in mind. "Say, Judge, you've got some boys in your family, haven't you?"

"Yes, three of them," smiled the Judge, complacently.

"Do you ever have to lick them?"

"I'm sorry to say that I do — occasionally."

"Well, don't you think there ought to be a better way to work it?"

"What way, for instance?"

"Why, keep on good terms with them, and be chummy and reason with them."

"If we had ideal children, then probably the ideal motive would be sufficient; but, as it is,

it won't always work. The fact is, Mr. Crowther, that corporal punishment is nature's way of correcting us all for disobedience. Take headache, indigestion, sickness, and pain — that is nature inflicting corporal punishment. We don't heed ideal motives. We disobey, and nature inflicts pain. Even contagious disease is a form of social punishment for some kind of social disobedience. Now, if grown-up men cannot be controlled by ideal motives, how can you expect children to be? No, I fear that we must imitate nature and resort to physical pain when no other motive will avail — at least I never could find a substitute."

"Well, I always feel mean about it afterward, as if I had taken advantage of my size," objected Pete.

"Perhaps that is because you punish in the wrong way," suggested the Judge. "A man should never whip his child when he is angry."

"What? Why, I couldn't whale Billy unless I was hot under the collar. You don't mean that a man ought to lick his kid in cold blood?"

"That depends upon what you mean by cold

blood. If by that you mean a cool head, then, yes, by all means."

"That let's me out. I never could put it on to Billy after I got cooled off."

"Probably that is why you feel mean about it. If you whip a child when you are angry, the element of vindictiveness enters in. Now that principle of 'an eye for an eye' is all wrong. Punishment should be corrective, not vindictive. We should never punish a child to get even."

"But suppose a boy does a mean thing — like striking his mother, for instance — hasn't he got something coming?"

"Yes, he has some help coming from some one wiser and better than he. Certainly he has no pain coming just to even things up. We are abandoning that principle in the management of our penal institutions, and parents should learn to do it, too. Pain may be necessary as a corrective motive, but it should be administered in a spirit of love, not vindictiveness. It is a harder thing to do, but it pays."

"But here, Judge, what does a kid know about

that corrective and vindictive business? All he kicks about is getting hurt."

"That is just where we make a mistake. Children appreciate the spirit back of punishment. They have a far keener sense of justice than we imagine, and they feel instinctively that vindictiveness is unjust."

That evening Pete sat in the lobby of the hotel and pondered over his conversation with the Judge. He was impressed, but not entirely convinced. "Judge Graham is a pretty wise old head," he mused, "but, all the same, there ain't one kid in a hundred that would care a whoop about that vindictive stuff if the licking didn't hurt. But then I s'pose a man hadn't ought to fight with his kid, and that's about what it amounts to if he licks him when he's mad. I wish Billy was with me to-night."

The following afternoon he received two letters from home. One was from Mrs. Crowther:

PETE DEAR: I am sure you will be glad to know that Billy has been such a dear boy. He has been minding like a little soldier. Last night after he went to bed we



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had a long talk about his dear daddy who works so hard and takes such good care of us. Billy agreed with me that he has the best father in the world. He said he would write to you in the morning. I will write a longer letter to-morrow.

JENNIE.

P. S. — Are you really henpecked, Pete?

Pete shifted uneasily in his chair.

"I was a chump to talk that way to Jen," he muttered. "I'll write to her to-night and crawl on that."

The other letter was from Billy.

DEAR DADDY: I am sorry I was a bad boy. I ain't going to be bad any more so you wont haf to lick me agin. I love you daddy.

BILLY.

Pete elevated his cigar to an angle of forty-five degrees and read the letters a second time. He took a couple of photographs from his pocket and looked at them, then, stepping over to the hotel desk, he said to the clerk: "Say, Jim, did I ever show you a picture of my kid?"

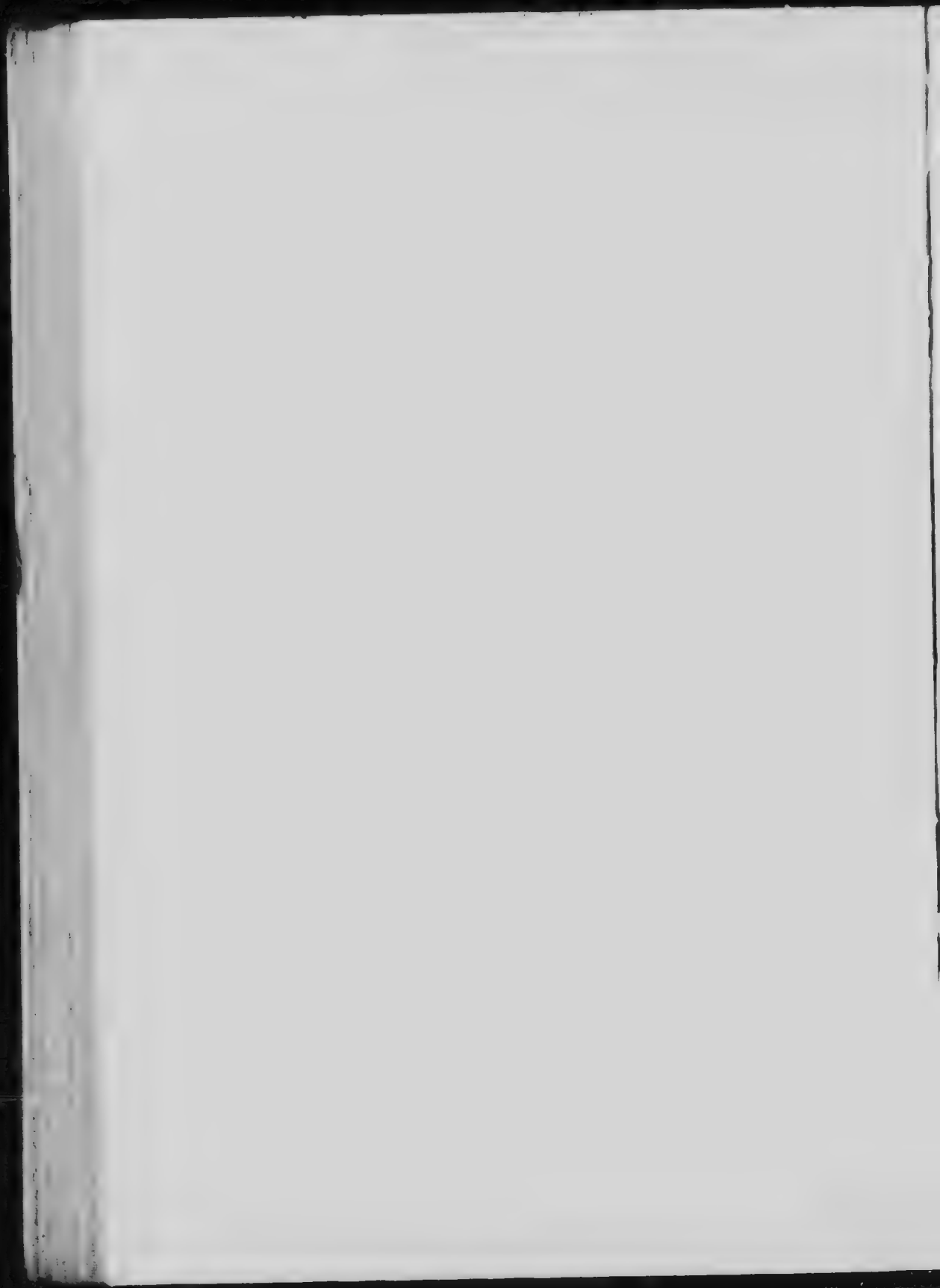
"Husky-looking boy," commented the clerk.

"Husky! I'd like to see a kid of his size that could put it on to — This is his mother here."





"Say, Jim, did I ever show you a picture of my kid?"



The clerk gazed admiringly at the photograph of Mrs. Crowther. "Pete, you're rich!"

"Rich! I'm a millionaire. I wouldn't take five hundred thousand apiece for that pair."

That afternoon Billy was in the park playing with a neighbour's boy.

"Say, can't you hear your mother calling over there?" asked Billy.

"Yes, I hear her. Let her call!"

"You better go in or your dad will tan your hide when he comes home."

"My pa never licks me," said the other.

Just then Mrs. Crowther appeared upon the porch and called: "Come in now, Billy, dear; mother wants you to help her."

"Oh, stay out here and play," urged his companion; "she won't do nothing to you."

A wave of recollection surged through Billy's mind. "No, I guess I'll go in," said he.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LURE OF THE COME-BACK

**W**HAT man has done man can do" is a motto that has been the inspiration of many valorous achievements. "What a man has done once he can do again" is a delusive variation of that motto and one that has lured many men into humiliation and defeat. When Samson, the strong man of Israel, said, "I will go out and shake myself as at other times," he had no doubt of his ability to shake himself back into his old time form. A good many centuries later Jim Brown was equally confident that "the old man could rattle just as good as ever if he got warmed up once," but this is bringing us ahead of our facts.

They were seated around the stove in the country store talking athletics.

"They say," observed Pete Crowther, the clerk, "that Joe Denton can throw Hi Morgan."

"Who says he can?" asked Sam Brown.

"Tom Casey," replied Pete, motioning down toward the sugar barrels. "Say, Tom, didn't you say that Joe Denton threw Hi Morgan?"

"That's what," responded Tom.

"Where did he throw him?" asked Sam.

"Over at Harve Merrill's raising last week."

"What holt?"

"He threwed him once square holt and once rough and tumble, and then Hi owned up that Joe was the best rassler."

"Well, I'd like to see him throw Hi myself jest for fun," said Sam.

"Maybe you think he didn't do it?"

"Maybe."

"Well, nobody cares a cuss what you think."

"See here, young feller," said Sam, flushing up, "you better stop up that hole in your face or it'll git you into trouble."

"It would take a better man than you be to stop it up," retorted Tom. Sam sprang up

from his chair, while Tom slid off the sugar barrel and squared himself.

"Oh, say, now, fellers," protested Jim Brown, stepping in between the belligerents, "don't make fools of yourselves. Set down there, Sam, and keep a decent tongue in your head. So Joe throwed Hi sure enough, did he, Tom?"

"You bet he did," growled Tom, "and he done it easy, too."

"I s'pose Joe will be over to town-meeting, won't he?"

Tom had started for the door. At Jim's question he turned about with his hand upon the latch. "You bet he will and our baseball nine will be over, too. We are going to make you fellers hump yourselves this time, and don't you forgit it." He walked out and slammed the door.

"It would be a good joke on us if them fellers over North should beat us at baseball and rassling both this spring," said Jim.

Pete and the other boys broke into a laugh.

"Well, now, see here, boys," said Jim seriously, "if you think that Joe Denton is going

to be a soft snap, you've got another guess coming. I saw him at Uhrling's dance last night and he's a husky looking feller. Last week I met Hal Johnson at Cedar Rapids and he said that last winter Joe could throw any man in their camp, and when they come down from the woods this spring they met a feller at Stevens Point that was the champion rassler of north Michigan, and Hal said that Joe threw him the best two out of three. Hal says maybe I can throw him, but that he'll be the toughest job I ever struck. Oh, I ain't afraid of him. I believe I can down him, but I ain't looking for no easy thing, that's all." Jim got up and left the store.

## II

A group of commercial travellers were seated in the hotel lobby discussing a wrestling match between Frank Gotch and Dr. B. F. Roller, which they had just witnessed at the Coliseum.

"Of course it's interesting," said Pete Crowther, "to watch a couple of athletes like Gotch and Roller, but, believe me, sport is getting too professional. We're getting to be like the

Romans; we hire our gladiators and we sit around and yammer at them. They go into it for the cash. It's a cold-blooded business proposition. Now you take this wrestling game; it used to be twice as interesting when men wrestled for the sport of it, and they had corking good wrestlers in those days, too. Why, when I was a kid in Iowa —— ”

“Now then, good people,” interrupted Billy Dawson, “we will hear about some athletes that will make Frank Gotch look like thirty cents.”

“That's what,” laughed Pete, “and I'm ready to make an affidavit. There was a fellow in our village named Jim Brown that could put it all over anybody in that country at wrestling. He had been the champion for four years. The only one in the township that could come anywhere near him was a fellow named Hi Morgan. The fellows used to wrestle for the championship every year on town-meeting day, and, say, I'd like to know what we have nowadays to compare with the old town-meeting. Take your World's Fairs and Pan-American



Expositions — why, people don't get near each other. Nobody knows anybody else, and don't want to either. And what do we do on election days now? Why, we just go and vote and then go home, but back in those times —— ”

“Did you ever hear of the pies that mother used to make?” asked Dawson.

“As I was about to say,” continued Pete, “the whole township would come together on election day and talk politics and trade horses and swap stories and play baseball and wrestle; you take it from me, it was a bully good time from morning till night, and you could get your dinner at the tavern for twenty-five cents, and —— ”

“Oh, come, Pete! Go to it; trot out your wrestlers.”

“Well, we had all begun to think that no man would ever show up that could put Jim Brown on his back, but one spring there was a fellow named Joe Denton came down from the pineries and hired out to a farmer over north, and pretty soon we began to hear how he was downing everybody over that way, but we didn't pay

much attention to it until he wrestled Hi Morgan at a raising and threw him twice. You know out in the country in those days, when a man built a barn or a house he would have a raising and everybody in the neighbourhood would come, and they would have a big supper and the boys would jump and wrestle, and you take it from me — ”

“Aw, can the philosophy, Pete. Bring on Jim Brown!”

“If you yaps will stop butting in I’ll get to the big match all the sooner. Well, when the next town-meeting day came it was a nice bright day and a big crowd was at the tavern, and when Joe Denton and the fellows from over north came marching into the tavern yard why, believe me, things began to warm up. Joe and Jim moved around in the crowd pretending not to notice each other, but they kept eying one another on the sly, and the small boys got to quarrelling about which was the better man, and even the old men got into the push. There was an old geezer in the village named Page, who was seventy-eight years old, and he got

to arguing with old man Hawkins from over north about Jim and Joe, and old Page got mad and swatted old Hawkins over the head with his cane, and several of the small boys got to fighting about it. Excitement? Why, that town-meeting would make the Coliseum this afternoon look like a Quakers' convention. The ball game was played in the forenoon and the village boys won by a close score, and Tom Casey, one of the fellows from over north, swore that the umpire robbed them of the game, and when some of the village boys got to bragging about the game Tom went up into the air. 'You wait,' he said, 'till Joe Denton gets his clamps on to Jim Brown and an umpire won't save you then!' Well, when the crowd came together on the green in the afternoon the whole town was there. George Robbins was running the programme. Robbins, you understand, was the village auctioneer and he had a voice like one of these megaphones, so they always made him the announcer and referee, and whenever there was an auction going on or some public sport up on the green, why, Robbins was strictly it.

You know every man has got some special stunt where he shines, and —— ”

“Ring off, Pete! Don’t hang us up like that.”

“As I was saying,” continued Pete, “old Robbins stepped out in front of the crowd and everybody got still. ‘The next thing is the wrestling match for the championship,’ he said. ‘Is there any one here would like to try for it? Jim Brown is the champion.’ Then Joe stepped out from the crowd and said, ‘I guess you can count me in,’ and Jim came out in front, too, and there they stood facing each other. Well, now, gents, I’ve had a slant in my time at all the big athletes, but you take it from me, I never saw two huskier looking men than Jim and Joe. Jim weighed about a hundred and ninety-five pounds and was as strong as a bull and quick as a cat. Joe was a little shorter and thicker set, and the muscles stood out on him like hickory knots. Those fellows, you understand, didn’t have trainers and coaches, and they weren’t taken care of like thoroughbred race horses, but when they began to walk

around each other getting ready to jump in and clinch ——”

“Gosh! that must have been exciting!” grinned Dawson.

“Exciting? Why the cold shivers kept running up and down my spine! Well, pretty soon they sprang at each other, and Joe got a little advantage and began to back Jim around so fast that it looked as if he might throw him over backward, and you ought to have seen those boys from over north pound each other on the back, and Tom Casey kept yelling, ‘Sock it to him, Joe! You’ve got him on the run!’ Jim finally broke loose from this hold, but he lost his balance a little and Joe tripped him and brought him down to his knees. That was the first time we had ever seen Jim Brown thrown even on to his knees, and, say, we village boys felt punk. Jim got up on his feet all right, and Joe started in for another rush, but Jim stopped him and began to trip him so hard that Joe kept backing up, and pretty soon Jim got Joe up into the air twice, and it was all Joe could do to strike on his feet, and then it was our

turn to yell and pound each other on the back; see?"

"By hek, Pete, them two fellers must have been darned good rasslers!" exclaimed one of his auditors.

"Well, Joe wriggled out of that hold, and then they jumped together like a couple of bulls, and you ought to have seen them rush up and down that ring! They were both bound to get a fall, and in a minute or two they went down and rolled over and over, but neither of them could lay the other one on to his back, so they broke hold and jumped up to their feet and, believe me, they both knew that they were up against it. Old Robbins thought it was about time for him to butt in, so he suggested that they try square hold once and then afterward they could try rough-and-tumble again. So they both agreed to that, but they had hardly got started at this hold when we all saw that Jim was the better man at that style of wrestling, because he was quicker with his feet, and in less than a minute he caught one of Joe's feet in a lock and got him off his balance, and

put him up in the air, and jerked him over, and jammed both of his shoulders down on to the ground quicker than greased lightning."

"Did you say greased lightning?"

"That's what, and if you know of anything quicker let me have it and I'll use it. That was the bulliest fall I ever saw in my life, and we village boys rushed in and began to pull Jim around, but Joe didn't get up right away and he kept feeling of his back. Jim ran over and asked if he had got hurt. Joe said he guess he had strained his back and couldn't wrestle any more that day. 'It's all right, Brown,' he said, 'you downed me fair and square,' and he held out his hand to Jim, and Jim grabbed it and shook it. Talk about Olympic games! That town-meeting had an Olympic game looking like a pom-pom-pullaway."

"It takes Pete to put up a spiel," asserted Billy Dawson. "A couple of country Jakes had a collar-and-elbow, and to hear Pete describe it you'd think it was a world's championship."

"Believe me," grinned Pete, "if Jim Brown were here this afternoon, in as good form as he

was at that town-meeting, he would give Frank Gotch a mighty sight stiffer argument than Doc Roller did."

## III

In the month of October, 1891, two men were approaching each other upon the main street of the city of Hastings, Nebraska. They were both dressed in the common garb of Western farmers and each wore a Grand Army button upon the lapel of his coat. As they met and glanced at each other one of them halted. "Say, ain't your name Bill Tompkins?" he inquired.

"That's my name," replied the other, "but I guess you've got the advantage — well, I'll be blamed if this ain't Jim Brown!"

"That's what. How are you old man?" And the two comrades shook hands vigorously.

"Well, well, Jim, the last I saw of you was when we was mustered out at Washington. What are you doing out here in Nebraska?"

"Why, I live here. I own a farm about six miles from Hastings. Do you live out here?"



"Yes, up in Hall County. I moved out here about two years ago."

"See here, old man, I ain't took a drink for eight years, but this calls for a glass of beer."

Bill followed Jim across the street into a saloon.

"Two beers!" called Jim to the bartender as they took their seat at a table.

"Say, Jim, you was the boss rassler of the regiment, wasn't you?"

"Yes, I could rassle some," admitted Jim complacently as he quaffed his beer.

"Rassle some! Well, I guess so! Do you remember how you took the starch out of that feller from Cincinnati?"

"Yes, he got all the rasslin he wanted that day, didn't he? Let's have another beer," and Jim motioned to the bartender to fill up the glasses.

"Do you ever rassle any out here?" asked Bill.

"No. When the folks git together down our way they don't do nothing but talk about finances and cuss corporations. Hi there!" and

Jim rapped the table with his empty glass. "Swilockabeer! It's all in a lifetime, Bill."

"Bet your life," laughed Bill. "Say, Mister" — to the bartender, as he brought the beer and wiped off the table — "this feller here used to be the best rassler in the Army."

"So?" smiled the barkeeper indulgently.

"He don't believe you're a rassler, Jim. I'd like to see you fool some of these ducks."

"I ain't forgot how to do it, bet your life;" and Jim cocked his hat upon the back of his head. "Well, let's have one more snifter, Bill. Say there! Swi beer mitout foam!"

"Same old jollier," laughed Bill. "This is jest like old times, ain't it?" They drank a few more beers and left the saloon.

"Ho-rang-flang!" cried Jim, as he stepped out upon the sidewalk. "My middle name is Samson!"

"The police will git on to you, Jim."

"Is there any policeman wants anything of me?" demanded Jim, glaring up the street.

"Anybody want to monkey with the buzz-saw?"

Bill leaned against the building in a paroxysm

of mirth. "Oh, my gosh Jim you'll make me bust a lung!"

"Say, Bill, there's a feller down here wiping off a counter that wants to see you. Come on."

They locked arms and moved down the street. Jim halted in front of a brick building and began to read a sign above the door. "White Elephant Saloon," he read slowly. "What's a saloon, Bill?"

"Ding'd if I know. Ain't it a place where they keep something to take?"

"Say, Mister," called Jim, thrusting his head inside the doorway, "is this a cheese factory?"

"We got some cheese sandwiches," responded the barkeeper jocosely.

"This is the place, Bill. Say, Mister, my friend here ain't feeling very well. His whistle is dry. Have you got something to wet it with?"

"I guess we fix him out," and seizing a couple of glasses he started for the beer pump.

"No, you don't Mister," said Jim, leaning over the bar and clutching him by the sleeve.

"We ain't drinking no snits to-day. What's the matter with schooners; eh, Bill?"

"That's what," agreed Bill. "Schooners is the stuff." The bartender filled the larger glasses.

"You might not believe it, gentlemen," said Bill, turning to a crowd of loungers around the pool tables, "but this feller here used to be the champion rassler of Iowa."

"Yes, and he's the champion of Nebrasky now!" asserted Jim, sucking the foam off his moustache."

The crowd gave a snicker.

"Is there any one here would like to try it a whack?" shouted Jim defiantly. "Here's a ten-dollar bill that says I can throw down and drag out anything in Adams County. Now put up or shet up!"

"That's the stuff, Jim. Make 'em put up or shet up," echoed Bill. "And here's five dollars more to go with it."

There was a hurried consultation and quick emptying of pockets among the loungers. "I guess we'll call you on that, party," said one

of them advancing to the bar with the money in his hand. "Put the stuff up with the bar-keeper."

Jim handed over the money and stepped out into the middle of the room. "Trot out your victim," he cried, "and I'll show him a thing or two."

A big, muscular-looking bully arose from among the loungers and advanced toward Jim.

"What holt do you want?" asked Jim.

"Oh, any kind suits me."

"All right; we'll make it square holt then."

As they grappled and began to trip at each other Jim displayed a flash of his youthful form. He forced his opponent vigorously about the room and once flung him into the air and brought him to his knees, but his spurt was of short duration. He soon began to pant for breath. His movements grew less and less vigorous. It was age against youth. The bully perceived his advantage and took the aggressive. He soon caught one of Jim's feet in a lock and forced him over by sheer strength, and laid him at full length upon his back, then

stepping over to the bar he took the money and placed it in his pocket.

Jim rolled over and slowly arose to his feet. He picked up his hat, and brushed the sawdust from his clothes.

"Come on, Bill," he said, and the comrades walked out, followed by the jeers of the loafers.

"I've lost the hang of it, Bill; I've jest plumb lost the hang of it."

Bill nodded his head sadly. "Yes, you've lost the hang of it, Jim."

They walked along in silence to the corner where Jim's team was tied.

"Well, I must be gitting along home. Good-bye, Bill."

"Good-bye, Jim."

When he reached the country road Jim began to review the events of the day. He glanced from one side of the road to the other, as if to evade the disagreeable truth, but there was no dodging it. As an athlete Jim Brown was a back number. Presently there began to pass through his mind a vision of old times back in Iowa. He thought of the town-meeting days,

and that one in particular when he met and vanquished Joe Denton. He was deep in this reverie when he reached his farm. As he glanced across his well-tilled acres and noted the many evidences of his own thrift and industry, a returning sense of things worth while took hold of him. He roused himself. "Never you mind!" he muttered; "you've got a good many days' work left in you yet, and you bet you used to could rassle even if you ain't no rassler any more."

## CHAPTER X

### JOY SELLING

**T**HE rain was coming down in torrents and dashing in vicious gusts against the hotel windows. Inside the writing-room Pete Crowther was bending over the table intently examining a railway time-card. "He can't leave the Junction till 10:30 tomorrow," he muttered, "and that will put him into Brownsville at 11:30. The only way I can head him off is to drive over. Gee, it's fierce such a night as this!"

He glanced through the window out into the darkness and storm, and then at the cheerful fire blazing in the open fireplace. For a moment he was tempted to stay in the hotel and take his ease, but suddenly he struck the table with his fist. "Nit, it's me for Brownsville!" and he hurried out into the office to find the landlord.



"Say, Reilly, you and I are about the same size; won't that rubber hunting suit of yours fit me?"

"I guess so. Why?"

"I want to rent it for to-night. I've got to drive over to Brownsville. I'll express it back to-morrow."

"You can't rent it, but you can borrow it. Who's going to drive you to Brownsville to-night?"

"I guess Smith will."

"Yes, I guess he will — not."

A few minutes later Pete presented himself at the livery stable.

"Hello, Smith, how's business?"

"Pretty dang quiet to-night. Ain't this a soaker, though?"

"Yes. I've got a job for you."

"Well?"

"I want to drive to Brownsville."

"Come off, Pete! It's twenty-two miles and darker than pitch. There ain't no team could keep the road to-night."

"Oh, that span of bays could. I've been

cut nights as bad as this. Be a sport, old man."

"Why doggone it, Pete, a horse couldn't see a foot ahead of him, and the mud is up to the hubs. I bet the bridges are out too."

"See here, Smith, there's fifteen dollars in it for you if you land me at Brownsville in the morning, and if we can't get through I'll pay you what you say is fair."

"I'll call Dan and see if he wants to drive you. I'll offer him half."

Dan came into the office looking dubious. "I don't believe we could make it, Pete," said he.

"Look here, Dan; you've got a reputation for nerve. You ought to be willing to tackle it if I am."

"Well, all right, but we will probably get upset in the mud. The bays and the road wagon, I s'pose?" said he to Smith.

"Yes."

After they had pulled out from the stable and plunged into the darkness beyond the outskirts of town Dan grew inquisitive. "Why in the deuce are you taking this drive to-night,

when you could go over to the Junction on the morning train and get into Brownsville before noon?"

"That's a fair question," laughed Pete. "You see there's a man over at Brownsville that's going to buy a big stock of goods for a new store. Martin has got a pull on him, and if he sees him before I do he'll sell him the stock. Martin went over to the Junction this evening and will get to Brownsville at 11:30 to-morrow. See?"

"Gee! its a dog's life to travel on the road, ain't it?"

"That depends on your dog. Take Jack there at the livery stable, now he's got his work cut out. He watches the barn and barks up the 'bus teams when they start for the train, and about once a day he goes up the street and whales the tar out of any dog that stands up to him, and the result is that Jack has got doghood; but take that dog up at the hotel: he lays around in front of the fire and doesn't do a thing but eat and sleep, and he's so fat he can't even run; why he's no dog. It takes

activity and scrapping to make a dog, and it's that way with a man."

"All the same, I could get plenty of activity without taking a drive such a night as this."

"Yes, but about once in so often a man ought to tackle a job that has got a kick to it — something that makes him fight for it, like this team trip, then he won't get soft. Gee! I like the flavour of that mud!"

"Say, Pete, there's a fellow in town that's organizing a labour union, and last night over at the hall he said that the way things are run nowadays everybody is trying to beat everybody else, and what one man gits he takes away from some one else. Ain't that about so? Here you are driving all night to beat Martin, and he is going to try and beat you, and one of you is goin' to git it in the neck sure."

"What of it, so long as we play fair? If I drive all night and get the order, won't I earn it? And if Martin doesn't get it he won't starve; he's got a good trade. There's enough chances for all of us, Dan, if we go to it. A man

has got to earn it, that's all. That labour organizer was giving you hot air."

"All the same Martin will feel sore if you beat him to it, and so will you if you lose out."

"Oh, not so very sore. Martin put one over on me last month. He sold Cameron his stock and I got left, but did I grouch around? Not on your life! I had done my best and I dropped it. It used to give me a pain every time I saw a competitor, but I've got over that good and plenty. It's this way, Dan: the woods are full of competitors. Everybody has got them — preachers and doctors and merchants and liverymen — everybody, and the sooner a man makes up his mind that his competitor has got as much right on earth as he has, why the better for his peace of mind. See?"

"You ought to hear Smith cuss whenever Barton gets a livery customer away from him," said Dan. "Why, he almost throws a fit every time he sees Barton."

"So much the worse for Smith. The thing to do with a competitor is to let him alone or he will get on your nerves. You take it from

me, a man never gets anywhere by knocking his competitors."

"That fellow over at the hall last night said that business these days is war. He said we are all fighting each other instid of working together. Ain't that so, Pete?"

"Oh, maybe there's something in that, so far as the big corporations and their employees are concerned, but with the average man like you and me that isn't so unless we make it so. If a fellow bucks up to his job and keeps trying to find better ways to do his work and kee hustling he won't get any more war than is good for him, but business isn't war — it's a game, and a man ought to be a sport and play it the way the baseball men do. They don't make a personal matter out of it and hate the man that plays on the other side. Business is a bully old game too. There wouldn't be so much fun in life if you took all the game out of it. That's what makes a man dig his toe corks in. If I don't beat Martin to it tomorrow, why, I'll give him a run for his money."

"Ain't you in favour of labour unions, Pete?"

"Why, sure. Labouring men are up against organized capital, and they've got to organize to protect themselves, but organization isn't the whole thing. You take it from me, organization can't get something for nothing and get away with it. Lots of these fellows spend so much time standing on their rights that they never come across with the goods. Organization can't take the place of hustling."

"Whoa!" called Dan suddenly. The wagon was settling rapidly upon Pete's side. He sprang out into the mud and sank nearly to his boot-tops while he braced himself against the wagon trying to prevent an upset. Dan steadied the horses and handed Pete the lantern. After the wagon was righted Pete wallowed ahead of the horses to investigate. "There's a bad washout this side of the road," he called. "I'll go ahead and you follow the lantern."

After getting past the washout Pete clambered back into the wagon. The horses toiled slowly ahead while the rain continued to pour down in torrents. The conversation grew more desultory and finally ceased altogether as both men

and horses braced themselves for a contest of endurance against the storm. It was about midnight when they came within the sound of a rushing stream. "We must be coming to Ten Mile Creek," said Dan. "This is halfway to Brownsville."

The horses suddenly came to a halt and refused to respond to Dan's urging. "Something's the matter up in front," said he. "Hold the lines, Pete." And seizing the lantern he sprang from the wagon and went on ahead.

"It's all off!" he called. "The bridge is washed out."

Pete jumped out of the wagon and joined Dan at the edge of the stream. The bridge was entirely washed away, with the exception of a single stringer which had withstood the force of the current, but seemed in momentary danger of giving away.

"The team couldn't wade it, eh, Dan?"

"Nix! It's over ten feet deep. It's back to Dover for us, Pete."

"Not on your life! I'm going to walk across on that stringer."



"Yes, you will."

"Sure. When I was a kid I could walk a board fence for a hundred yards without falling off. I bet I can walk that stringer. Is there a farmhouse near here on the other side?"

"Yes, Mr. Thomas lives near the creek — first gate on the left."

Pete took the lantern in one hand and his grip and sample case in the other and approached the end of the stringer.

"Hold on, Pete; Thomas has got a big dog that's an ugly brute, and he'll jump you sure. Here's an iron wrench with a knob on the end. You can paste him one with this."

"Good idea," said Pete as he slipped the wrench into his coat pocket. "I feel a little like fighting anyhow. I'll take it out of that dog's hide, if he gets too fresh."

The current dashed swiftly against the stringer, overflowing it in places, as Pete made his way cautiously across.

"Good luck, old man," called Dan, when he saw that Pete had safely reached the other side. "Look out for that dog."

When Pete reached the gate and turned into the farmyard he had proceeded but a few steps when he was suddenly greeted with the furious barking of an angry dog. He dropped his grip and sample case and drew the wrench from his pocket just as he caught sight of a huge animal bounding toward him with the evident purpose of attacking him. Pete ran toward the brute and shook the lantern in his face and quickly dealt him a sharp clip upon the side of the head. The dog sprang backward with a snarl, but checked himself and charged again, hurling his whole weight full at Pete's throat. Once more Pete shook the lantern in his face, and this time brought the iron knob down squarely upon his skull with such force as to nearly stun him. Meanwhile he kept up a vigorous hello toward the farmhouse. At this instant a light appeared at the window.

"What do you want out there?" cried Mr. Thomas.

"Call off this dog or I'll knock his block off!" shouted Pete.

The farmer whistled and called the dog, who retreated sullenly toward the house.

"Who be you, and what do you want?" called Mr. Thomas again.

"My name is Crowther. I'm a travelling man, on the way to Brownsville. I want to get in out of this rain. See?"

The farmer opened the door and admitted Pete. "Wal, I swan!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of his mud-bespattered guest. "What are you drivin' for sech a night as this? Where's your team?"

"The other side of the creek. The bridge is washed out."

"I s'pose you want to stay all night."

"Nit. I want you to drive me to Brownsville."

"Not by a darn sight! I've got rhumatiz, and I wouldn't do it anyway sech a night as this."

"Haven't you got a hired man that would like to make a few dollars?"

"My man likes to make an extry dollar, and he owns a team, but I bet he wouldn't git up and go out in this storm."

"Let's go up to his room and see."

The farmer took the lantern and led the way upstairs into a sleeping room.

"Say, Jake," he exclaimed, as he shook the sleeping man vigorously, "there's a travelling man here that wants to go to Brownsville."

"All right," grunted Jake, drowsily; "tell him he kin go."

"But he wants you to drive him," persisted the farmer, giving him another shake.

"Let him to go the devil!" muttered Jake. "Lemme alone."

"I don't want to go to the devil; I want to go to Brownsville. See?" interposed Pete, as he stepped to the bedside. "Look here, Jake, there's fifteen dollars in it for you."

At the words "fifteen dollars" Jake opened his eyes and turned over.

"Cash?" he inquired.

"Sure. See here," and Pete produced a roll of bills. "I'll peel off three of these fives if you land me at Brownsville in the morning."

At the sight of the money the hired man sat up in bed. He glanced at the window, against

which the rain was dashing in copious sheets. "It's a deuce of a night to drive in," he muttered.

"Sure it is, and that's why I'm offering you so much money. Do you suppose I'd pay you fifteen dollars if it was moonlight and a macadamized road? Not on your life!"

Pete's money argument produced its effect.

"Can I take your buckboard if I drive my team?" inquired Jake of Mr. Thomas.

"Yes, but you ought to pay me a dollar and a half for the use of it."

"All right. I'll have the team around in about twenty minutes." And Jake jumped out of bed and began to pull on his clothes.

"Do you have to take many trips like this?" asked the hired man, after they had pulled out from the farmyard.

"Oh, I guess about once in six weeks I get into some such mix-up."

"You ought to have pretty good pay. What wages do you git?"

"That's right to the point," laughed Pete.

"Well, I get a salary of \$300 a month and my

expenses paid, and I make commissions, about \$1,000 a year, besides."

"Aw, quit your kiddin'!"

"It does sound like it," admitted Pete, "but I'm giving you straight goods."

"Gosh! I wish I could make half of that, I'd be satisfied. I bet you don't work any harder than I do either."

"How many hours a day do you put in?" asked Pete.

"I git up about half-past four in the morning, and git through about nine at night."

"How much wages do you get?"

"Thirty dollars a month, and I own this team and make about fifteen dollars a month with them."

"How much do you save?"

"Oh, about thirty-five dollars a month. I've got \$600 out on interest, and this team is worth \$300."

"You've got a pretty good start. What are you going to do — buy a farm after a while?"

"I don't know. I like horses, and I'd rather do teaming than anything else."

"Not a bad business, either. There's a fellow named Joe Ryan that does the teaming for our company. He owns his teams. He used to be one of our porters at forty-five dollars a month, but he got to teaming and worked into that job. The bookkeeper told me that Joe cleans up over \$250 a month. That's going some, eh?"

"I've been thinking about some such job as that," said Jake eagerly, "but how is a feller going to git at it?"

"You have to lay for your chance and keep hustling," advised Pete. "You take it from me, a man can just about land what he goes after if he plugs hard enough. Maybe I could get you a job with our company as porter, and then you might work your way in with Joe. It would be up to you to make good."

"I'll work like blue blazes if you git me in there."

"I'll see what I can do and let you know."

It was 6.30 in the morning when the team pulled into Brownsville.

"Shall we go up to the hotel?" asked Jake.

"Nit. We'll drive right up to Stevens's place. I'll inquire where he lives."

After getting directions they proceeded up to Mr. Stevens's residence. Pete alighted and unstrapped his grip and sample case and handed Jake fifteen dollars. "You go down to the hotel and feed the team, and get a warm breakfast, and tell Mac. to charge it on my bill."

"Don't forget about that job, Mr. Crowther," admonished Jake, as he shook hands good-bye.

"Sure not. I like the way you do things, Jake. You will hear from me."

When Mr. Stevens appeared at the door Pete promptly introduced himself.

"Where did you accumulate all that mud?" inquired Mr. Stevens.

"Oh, driving from Dover."

"What, last night?"

"Sure. I was out all night."

"And you want to sell me a stock of groceries," laughed Stevens.

"You're a good guesser," grinned Pete.

"Come in and clean up and take breakfast with us," invited Stevens. "I'm sorry to say





Pete promptly introduced himself



that you won't get anything else out of me. You can't sell me any goods. I am going to buy my groceries from —— ”

“Bond-Mathews & Co.,” interrupted Pete with a smile, “and Martin is coming in on the 11:30. That's why I drove over last night. You know, we Dodd-Garrells people are a wide-awake outfit. We keep just that far ahead of our competitors. See?”

“Oh, I guess you have got a good company,” admitted Stevens, “but you know my brother-in-law has bought from Bond-Mathews for years, and I am personally acquainted with Martin.”

“Sure, and he's a good fellow and has got a good company. There's only one better, and that is Dodd-Garrells & Co. Well, I'll take breakfast with you anyway.”

Pete at once became an object of interest to the family, as he described in his jovial way the adventures of the night before.

“Any one would think that you had been taking a joy ride,” smiled Mrs. Stevens.

“That's about what it was,” asserted Pete.

"When a man has got good health and a rubber suit it's great sport to rough it in storm, especially when he lands on a breakfast like this. Yes, I will take another muffin, please."

During breakfast Mrs. Stevens had occasion to go into the pantry, and through the open doorway Pete caught sight of a can of Amigon baking powder upon the pantry shelf.

"You see, Mr. Stevens," said he, "every big company has got some special feature in its business that's a winner. One reason why we do such a big business is because we are the people that put out the Amigon goods. Those Amigon goods, you understand, are the class. When you see that word 'Amigon' on a package — no matter what it is, cocoa, baking powder, extracts, canned goods, or anything else — why you can bank on its quality; it's aristocratic stuff. Why, when people use Amigon goods once you can't get them to change. Take Amigon baking powder. Now —"

Mr. Stevens and his wife broke into a laugh. "My wife has been telling me that no matter where I buy my stock I must put in Amigon

baking powder and cocoa and extracts. We have used them in our family for two years."

"I might have known it!" cried Pete enthusiastically. "These muffins now — light as a feather. Well, that's good! I'll sell you our Amigon line anyhow. Mrs. Stevens will back me up."

"I certainly will," said she, "and you ought to get something for your long drive."

After breakfast when they withdrew to the sitting-room Pete caught sight of a violin box upon the piano. "May I look at your fiddle?" he asked.

"Certainly. Help yourself."

Pete took out the violin and tuned it. After drawing the bow across it a few times he began to inspect the instrument carefully.

Stevens tipped a wink at his wife.

"Where did you get this fiddle?" asked Pete.

"From my father, and he got it from his father."

"You've got a corking good fiddle here."

"Yes, we were offered eighty dollars for it last month."

"Nit — don't take it."

"Certainly not. It isn't for sale. Play us something, Mr. Crowther. My daughter will play your accompaniment."

Pete needed no second invitation, and they were soon making the air vibrate with waltzes, two-steps, and marches. Between selections Pete vented his enthusiasm over the violin. "If you ever get ready to take \$100 for it, give me the first chance, will you?"

"Yes, but you won't get the chance. We will never let that violin go out of the family."

Pete placed the instrument back into the case.

"Speaking about those Amigon goods," said he, "it's a big thing for a new store to get a reputation for classy goods, and the beauty of that Amigon line is that while the goods are the finest quality, the prices are no higher than other companies charge for ordinary goods, and they cost you less than these brands that are advertised so much. I want to show you the line, Mr. Stevens. The best stores in this State are pushing them. They will give any store a reputation. Let's take your price lists

now and compare them with some special prices that I'll make you if you will put in the whole Amigon line. We will begin with baking powder, cocoa, and extracts — you want them anyway."

An hour later Pete had taken Mr. Stevens's order for the entire Amigon line, including canned fruits, soaps, olives, pickles, teas, cigars, tobaccos, and a miscellaneous line of other fancy groceries.

"There, that's all!" insisted Stevens. "I declare, you've got about half of my order. The rest of it goes to Martin."

"All right," said Pete. "Smoke another Amigon cigar. I want to play a little more on that bully old fiddle before I go."

After a few more selections on the violin, Pete suddenly laid the instrument aside.

"See here, Mr. Stevens, I want to give you a little straight talk. You will find after you've been in business a while that it pays to concentrate your trade. You can always get better terms if you buy the bulk of your goods at one place. Now I've got the best part of your

order — the fancy goods — and so I can afford to do better by you on the staples than any one else can. I'm going to offer you a deal that you can't afford to pass up. You are well posted on the prices of staples, and I want you to sit down here and figure with me a few minutes, and I want to give you some inside points on quality."

"It won't do you any good, Crowther."

"Yes, it will. It always makes me feel better when I offer to do a man a good turn."

During the next half hour they went carefully over the matter.

"Now you'll have to admit," said Pete, "that this is the best proposition you've had yet, and you know that you are dead safe on quality. It's like picking up a hundred dollars off that table. I couldn't make you this offer if I didn't have the rest of your order."

"Martin will be badly disappointed," mused Stevens hesitatingly.

"So will I if I don't get the whole order. You might as well let the tail go with the hide, and this is purely a business matter. You've





...It's great sport to bring home the bacon,' he wrote in conclusion "



got to consult your own interests, and nobody else will make you such an offer as this on the staples alone."

Before the hour of 11:30 arrived, Pete had booked Stevens's order for his entire stock, amounting to over \$8,000. When the train, which was an hour late, pulled into the station, and Martin stepped off and came face to face with Pete he dropped his sample case upon the platform and gazed at his competitor in astonishment.

"How did you get here?" he cried.

"I drove from Dover last night."

"In that storm?"

"There was a storm, come to think," grinned Pete.

"After Stevens's order, eh?"

"That's what, and I landed it."

"No?"

"Yes."

"Did you get it all?"

"Sure, I made a clean-up. You see, old man, I had to even up that Cameron deal."

"Looks like horse and horse," admitted

Martin dubiously. "Where are you going this afternoon?"

"I'm going in to the house. Stevens is coming in to-morrow to change the order some and pick out some of the stuff."

"Well, enjoy yourself, Pete. I know how you feel."

Late that afternoon when Pete reached the office and presented the situation to Mr. Dodd that gentleman sat back in his chair and regarded him with a look of mingled satisfaction and envy.

"Great work, Pete, great work!" said he. "It reminds me of the old days. You make me feel like taking a sample case and striking out again myself. But, say, you haven't had any sleep since night before last. I want you to go up to the best hotel and stop at our expense. Get a good rest. We will try and make a good impression upon Mr. Stevens to-morrow."

On the evening of the following day Pete was sitting in his room at the hotel writing a letter to his wife. He told her about the stirring events of the past two days, describing in detail

the incidents of the long night ride, the big order, and the satisfactory day that Mr. Stevens had passed with the company. "It's great sport to bring home the bacon," he wrote in conclusion, "and have everybody at the house give you the glad hand, but all the same I'm ready to start out again. A little taffy tastes pretty good, but too much of it is as bad as castor oil. This is a crackajack hotel, and it has got all the dudads that go along with \$6 per (the company pays it), but I've always noticed that when a hotel gets about so high-toned it goes in for a lot of monkey-work that isn't any earthly use, and the people in it swell around too much and don't act natural. I prefer to be where things are more genuine, even if they aren't quite so rashashay. I'll be glad tomorrow when I get out and hit the pike again. A man has the most fun while he is playing the game.     PETE."

THE END





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